

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF FOCUS-ON-FORM INSTRUCTION:
THE CASE OF AUXILIARY SELECTION IN L2 FRENCH ACQUISITION

By

VIRGINIE DASSE

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The members of the Committee approve the Thesis of Virginie Dasse defended on June, 15th of 2004.

James Mitchell
Professor Directing Thesis

Gretchen Sunderman
Committee Member

Erasmus Gerato
Committee Member

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above named committee members.

To my most avid supporter, and future husband, Lance

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ABSTRACT

To determine the role of different types of form-focused instruction in L2 French acquisition, this paper addresses three research questions: 1) Do differences in the types of instructional treatments lead to differences in language learning in the short-term?, 2) Can raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms facilitate acquisition?, 3) Do different types of instruction have different long-term effects? Intact university classes of elementary (n = 35) and intermediate (n = 45) French learners were divided into three groups that received different forms of instruction: Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning, Focus-on-Form; and a fourth class used as a Control group. The target form selected for the study was French auxiliary selection in the perfect past tense (*passé composé*). Accuracy of the target form was measured over the short- and long-term, by three distinct tasks: a composition, a fill in the blank cloze test, and a grammaticality judgment test. The results showed that types of instructional treatments led to differences in language learning in the short-term. The statistical analysis revealed a complex picture of gains depending on treatment and type of task under study, however, the gains were not maintained in the long-term. The implications of the variation of results for both research and classroom are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In a context where formal instruction is at the heart of the debate in language acquisition and has been subject to controversy and discussion among researchers for at least 40 years (Ellis, 2001), this study reports on a study of three distinct instructional approaches at an American university, examining the transferability of the research findings on mostly ESL students to the study of learners of French as a second language.

Many researchers have attempted to define and name the forms of instruction which can be applied to the second/foreign language classroom and there is still some debate over the precise terminology (Long, 1991; Doughty and Williams, 1998b; Ellis, 2001). The most widely used terms are those established by Long (1991). He makes the following distinctions: 1) *Focus on FormS (FonFs)*, characterized by teaching the forms rather than the messages they convey (e.g., the grammar-translation method); 2) *Focus on Meaning (FonM)*, in which no attention is paid to the forms used to convey a message, the instruction is devoted to communication only; and 3) *Focus on Form (FonF)*, a balance between a *Focus on FormS* and a *Focus on Meaning*: “focus on form consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features by the teacher or one or more students” (Long and Robinson, 1998, p. 23). This shift occurs during communication.

The bulk of the research into the effects of second language instruction to date have tracked the linguistic progress of one group exposed to essentially a FonF approach and another exposed to FonFs instruction (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Doughty, 2001; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002; Loewen, 2003; Klapper & Rees, 2003). The present study aims to further explore this area, concentrating on the effect that FonF, FonFs, and FonM have on the acquisition of a grammatical form with communicative value in French: the auxiliary selection of *être* (to be) or *avoir* (to have) in the perfect past tense known as ‘*passé composé*’ in the Target Language (TL).

Studies on the effectiveness of focus-on-form instruction have proliferated in recent years. Ellis (2001) improved Long’s (1991) definition of FonF instruction by distinguishing two types: ‘Planned focus-on-form’ and ‘incidental focus-on-form.’ In many studies, focus on form was the result of prior planning on the part of the researcher/teacher. A large amount of this research (Wong, 2001; Leow, 2001; Salaberry, & Lopez-Ortega, 1998; Fotos, 1994; Ayoun, 2001) has been categorized under the term ‘planned focus on form’ (Ellis, 2001), involving ‘intensive attention to preselected forms’ (Ellis, 2001, p.16). In ‘incidental focus on form’ (Ellis, 2001), attention is distributed to a larger range of forms and none of these is preselected for instructional treatment (Leeser, 2004; Loewen, 2003; Klapper, & Rees, 2003; Ellis, 2001; Williams, 2001; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002).

Another area of L2 focus-on-form research that has received in the last decade considerable pedagogic interest is interaction in small groups. Research has shown that learners generally perform better in classroom tasks while working together than individually (Storch, 1999). The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) suggests that negotiation of meaning following communication breakdown will benefit learners. Long argues that interaction facilitates acquisition because of the conversational and linguistic

modifications that occur in such discourse and that it provides learners with the input they need. As linguistic units are rephrased, repeated, and reorganized to aid comprehension, learners may have opportunities to notice features of the target language that they otherwise would not have. In a similar vein, according to Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, awareness of specific linguistic items in the input is necessary for language learning to occur.

Finally, in contradiction to the view taken by Krashen (1982), research suggests that implicit acquisition leads to fossilization of language forms and is unlikely to lead to full development of the L2 grammar (Harley, 1992; Swain, 1985).

I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Looking back at the field of foreign language instruction over the past 30 years, at least two broad trends can be identified. The first trend raises the question of whether formal instruction has an effect on Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The second trend raises the question of whether type of instruction makes a difference. The bulk of the research since the mid-nineties has, therefore, focused on finding various methods to integrate formal instruction within a communicative framework.

1. Does formal instruction have an effect on SLA?

Krashen (1973), using the research of Dulay and Burt (1974), suggested that, just as there is a natural sequence in the way children acquire their L1, with certain grammatical morphemes being acquired before others, so there is for second language (L2) learners. According to Krashen (1985), L2 learners need only sufficient motivation and exposure to comprehensible input in the TL, to successfully acquire an L2. So, for Krashen, learning is less important than acquisition because ‘instruction’ does not contribute directly to acquisition and should be limited to a few rules that can be learned.

Felix (1981) observed thirty-four German high school students learning English over an eight-month-period. The students were taught with the audiolingual method. This method consists of pattern drills and conversation practices; structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills and there is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content. Felix conducted his research within the context of the Kiel Project on Language Acquisition which focuses on a comparative analysis of different types of language acquisition (L1 versus L2 acquisition, instructed L2 acquisition versus naturalistic L2 acquisition – through immersion in the target country). Felix compared the findings of several L2 studies (including Dulay & Burt, 1974) that deal with the acquisition of grammatical features (such as negative and interrogative structures) to his findings with the German students. Felix found that the high school students’ L2 acquisition resembled the linguistic development of naturalistic L2 learners. Felix (1981) concluded that “contrary to popular belief, the way people learn a second language does not totally depend on the conditions under which they are exposed to the L2 data” (p. 108). According to the author, language learning did not appear to follow principles of habit formation, which the audiolingual method relies on, but there seemed to be a universal and common set of principles which could be adapted to any conditions under which learning can take place, in a naturalistic setting or in a classroom.

Even if Felix did not focus greatly on the teacher or the method of instruction, but rather on how the learner’s acquisition of particular L2 grammatical features develops over time, this study is quite important – especially in a context where several researchers have indicated that formal instruction could impede the natural acquisition process of an L2 (Krashen, 1974; Fathman, 1975; Martin, 1980). For instance, if the

learners are not ready for acquiring rules that are too complex for them, their learning process will fossilize.¹

Harley's (1989) study focused on the acquisition of the distinction between 'passé composé' and 'imparfait' among French immersion students in Canada. The researcher, who was also the instructor of the students, used functional-grammar materials² to teach the subjects of the experimental group over an eight-week-period. The students from the control group received their regular instruction. The pretests and the post-tests constituted a written composition, a cloze test and an oral interview. The students of the control group did not score better on the post-test, while the experimental group scored significantly better than they did in the pretest on the three tasks. Harley demonstrated that formal instruction has an effect on SLA and that the instructional effects are thus beneficial in both planned (written composition, cloze test) and unplanned language use (oral interview).

White (1991) studied the effect of formal instruction on adverb placement with Canadian French children learning English in an intensive ESL program. The participants of the experimental group received a two-week treatment on the use of frequency and manner adverbs three months into their ESL program. The control group did not receive any instruction on adverb placement. The pretests, post-tests and delayed post-tests (five months later) consisted of a grammaticality judgment task, a preference task, and a card sorting task. The experimental group showed significantly greater accuracy in the use of adverbs on all three tasks compared to the control group. The experimental group performed better in the judgment task than in either the preference task or the manipulation task (in which the participants had to produce sentences). The gains disappeared, however, in the delayed post-test. White concluded from her experiment that formal instruction has an effect on learners' ability to produce specific linguistic features accurately - it results in increased accuracy. However, according to the results of her study, formal instruction seems to have a short-term effect on the learners.

2. Does type of instruction make a difference?

The second trend assumes that instruction does make a difference and raises the question of whether some types of instruction make more of a difference than others. Lightbown and Spada's (1990) study investigated the developing spoken English of French elementary school students in Canada. The students in grades 5 and 6 received five months of intensive ESL instruction (communicative in nature). The researchers, during their observations of the four classes, focused their attention on the students' use of the progressive -ing form and also on the adjective-noun order in noun phrases. After analysis of their observations, Lightbown and Spada found differences in the production accuracy of the targeted grammatical features among the four classes. For instance, in class 1, the students were more accurate in their use of the progressive -ing. In class 4, the learners had the lowest accuracy on all the features examined by the researchers, but had very good comprehension skills — as demonstrated by the audiotaped recordings that were made while the learners were playing the "picture card game" (Lightbown & Spada, 1990). In this visual task a learner describes a picture until the interviewer can guess

which of a set of four similar (but not identical) pictures is being described. Analyses of the audiotapes showed that virtually all students in class 4 spoke and understood English with confidence. After analysis of the teachers' types of instruction used in their class, Lightbown and Spada found that the students' accuracy on specific grammatical features in the L2 correlated with the form of instruction they received. In class 1, the most form-focused instruction was provided and in class 4, the instruction was highly focused on the content rather than the form. Lightbown and Spada's study demonstrated not only that type of instruction makes a difference on the production accuracy of L2 learners, but also that form-based instruction within a communicative context could contribute to more accurate levels of linguistic knowledge and performance.

Doughty (1991) examined the effects of formal instruction on L2 acquisition of English relative clauses. She used twenty English as a Second Language (ESL) students to test the effects of 'meaning-oriented instruction'³ and 'rule-oriented instruction'⁴. The students were tested on reading passages that contained relative clauses. The students were split in three groups: 1) The meaning-oriented group received a treatment based on semantic rephrasing and sentence clarification strategies; 2) The rule-oriented group received a treatment with explicit grammar instruction; 3) The control group just read the passage again. Doughty found that the meaning-oriented group and the rule-oriented group scored significantly better than the control group. The meaning-oriented group was also considerably better at comprehending the text than the rule-oriented group. The researcher concluded that formal instruction had a beneficial effect on the language acquisition of L2 learners and that type of instruction made a difference.

In the context of a series of studies investigating the effectiveness of form-focused instruction in Canadian French immersion programs, Day and Shapson (2001) conducted an experimental study on the conditional. It built on a study conducted by Harley and Swain (1984) that proposed a multilevel model of language teaching (previously suggested by Allen in 1983) to bridge the gap between traditional formal instruction (with a Focus on FormS) and the full communicative use of language (Focus on Meaning). This model had the following three components: 1) a structural-analytic component (focus on grammar), 2) a functional-analytic component (focus on grammatical items in a communicative context), and 3) a nonanalytic component (focus on the natural use of language). In this study, the subjects were English native-speakers who participated in an early French immersion program in Canada. There were 6 classes of approximately 26 students each, in both the Experimental group (156 students) and the Control group (159 students). The Experimental group received the treatment based on the multilevel model of language teaching proposed by Harley and Swain (1984) for 3 hours of instruction a day for five to seven weeks. It was a specifically designed curriculum unit focusing on the use of the conditional and other grammatical features. The treatment included a cooperative learning approach, linguistic games and exercises, and group- and self-evaluation procedures. The control group received their normal classroom instruction which covered various aspects of the Target Language, excluding the conditional. The pretest, post-test and follow-up test consisted of a cloze test, a written composition, and an oral interview. The findings indicated that the participants of the Experimental group improved their performance, and that these gains were maintained in the follow-up testing. This result supports the hypothesis that formal instruction has an effect on production accuracy. The results of *post hoc* comparisons

showed that the Experimental group performed significantly better than did the Control group — both in the post-testing and in the follow-up testing. As a result of this experiment, Day and Shapson confirmed that instruction does make a difference. Day and Shapson concluded that the improvement of immersion student's oral and grammatical skills can be reached through a method of instruction that incorporates formal analytic with functional, and communicative approaches to language teaching.

Harley (1998) examined the effect of Focus-on-Form instruction on young L2 French learners in an immersion program. The grammatical feature of interest in her study was the acquisition of gender in French. A pre-test, a post-test (immediately after the five-week-treatment) and a follow-up test (six months following the treatment) were administered to the students who received focus-on-form instruction and to the students who received their regular instruction (with no particular instructional focus). The results of Harley's experiment showed that the focused-on-form group produced better results than did the group who received instruction with no specific focus. Furthermore, the students from the focused-on-form instruction group could show that they had a metalinguistic knowledge of gender in French. According to Harley, this is a precursor to, if not a part of, learning.

Thus, if numerous studies have shown that focused-on-form instruction is more beneficial than other types of instruction (Ellis *et al.*, 1999, 2002; Harley, 1988; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Schmidt, 1990, 1994; Swain, 1985; 1995), what kind of descriptive framework can account for the way in which teachers accomplish focus on form instruction?

3. How can teachers implement formal instruction in the communicative classroom?

The bulk of the research since the mid-nineties has focused on finding various methods to integrate formal instruction within a communicative framework — whether through grammar consciousness-raising tasks (Fotos, 1991, 1994), interaction enhancement (Muranoi, 2000), textual enhancement (Wong, 2003), or input and visual enhancement (Lim, 2001).

Fotos and Ellis (1991) conducted a pilot study on grammar instruction. First-year Japanese EFL college students were divided into three groups: 1) the grammar task was performed by groups of four students ($n = 16$) and dyads ($n = 8$), 2) in another classroom, a teacher-fronted grammar lesson was presented in English to 28 students, 3) the remaining students served as the control group ($n = 32$) and did not receive instruction on the targeted feature of the study — dative alternation.⁵ The pre-, post- and final tests consisted of three identical grammaticality judgment tasks and three identical tasks where the participants were required to generate two rules on dative alternation. The post-test scores of the group with a grammar consciousness-raising task increased 10%, while the grammar-lesson students made a gain of 14%. The grammar consciousness-raising task appeared to have functioned equally well as the grammar lesson in the short-term and in the long-term (no statistical difference between both groups). Furthermore, the grammar task appeared to have promoted similar amounts of interaction with 63 negotiation counts in the L2 as the average mean number of negotiations reported in a previous study

(Doughty & Pica, 1986) for performance of a two-way information gap task. This pilot study showed that grammar instruction and communicative language use could be simultaneously integrated through grammar consciousness-raising tasks. But the results were, according to Fotos, somewhat limited since only one grammatical feature was tested, i.e. dative alternation. In addition, the gains in L2 accuracy were not maintained in the delayed post-test.

Thus, Fotos (1994), in a replication of her study (1991), utilized three grammar tasks: 1) adverb placement, 2) indirect object placement, and 3) relative clause usage. She administered these three tasks to three classes of Japanese ESL students. Class 1 received a FonFs treatment⁶ in the form of three teacher-fronted grammar lessons on adverb placement, indirect object placement, and relative clause usage respectively. Class 2 received a FonF treatment,⁷ in which the participants performed three grammar consciousness-raising tasks with the same grammatical features. Class 3 received a FonM treatment,⁸ characterized by three communicative tasks with no grammatical content. There was no control group. Pretests, posttests, and delayed posttests were administered to the three classes. All three groups scored better on the posttest than they did on the pretest, and gains were maintained for the three groups on the delayed posttest. The gains made on the posttest and the delayed posttest by the three classes were significant within each group but not across groups .

To test her hypothesis that performance of the grammar consciousness-raising tasks led to as much L2 production as the FonM approach, Fotos analyzed the quantities of negotiation made during performance of the three tasks by the FonF group and the FonM group. The researcher counted the number of L1 and L2 negotiations made by both discussion groups separately. She also counted the number of L2 words and the average number of L2 negotiations per minute for each group. The results of these multiple measures of negotiation quantity were quite similar across the tasks and the groups. The average length of L2 words produced by the Japanese students in the FonF group was even slightly longer than the average length produced by the communicative group (FonM). For example, the FonF group produced a large portion of interactions in task 2, on the indirect object, because it was a combination of an information gap task and an agreed-upon solution task.

Fotos also compared grammatical accuracy across the FonF (with the grammar-consciousness raising tasks) and FonFs groups on adverb placement, indirect object placement, and relative clause usage. She found that the FonF group was as accurate as the grammar group (FonFs) on the three targeted grammatical items. The results of Fotos' study lent support to the use of grammar consciousness-raising tasks as one possible alternative to teaching with a FonM or with a FonFs approach. It integrates language use and grammar instruction in the classroom.

Another teaching method that characterizes FonF instruction is interaction enhancement. Muranoi (2000) investigated the effect of interaction enhancement (IE) on the learning of English articles by first-year Japanese college students. Muranoi used IE as a communicative instructional technique to enhance interaction by means of implicit negative feedback provided by the teacher through recasts⁹ during a problem-solving task. To evaluate their performance on English articles, Muranoi used four different tasks that were completed individually: 1) an oral story description (OS) task, 2) an oral picture description task (OP), a written picture description (WP) task, and 4) a

grammaticality judgment (GJ) task. Muranoi utilized two experimental groups and one contrast group. Only experimental groups 1 and 2 received enhanced instruction. The students in the contrast group also participated in strategic interaction (i.e. classroom interaction characterized by negotiation of meaning) but without any enhancement. The two types of IE differed only in the debriefing phase. Experimental group 1 received the interaction enhancement treatment plus a formal debriefing (IEF). Experimental group 2 received the interaction enhancement treatment plus meaning-focused debriefing (IEM). The contrast group received only the non-enhanced interaction treatment (NEI). The results of the immediate post-tests and the delayed post-tests were the following:

- 1) The IEF group and the IEM group performed significantly better than the NEI group (contrast group) on the use of the definite and indefinite articles. According to Muranoi, this suggests that IE (with corrective feedback) has a beneficial effect on the learners' restructuring of their IL system.
 - 2) The IEF group was grammatically more accurate than the IEM group on the four different tasks of all post-tests. Therefore, this suggested that two different methods of IE differently affect learners' restructuring of their IL system.
 - 3) The effects of IE were maintained between the immediate and the delayed post-tests.
- Finally, Muranoi concluded that guiding learners to focus on form within meaning-oriented instruction is beneficial to L2 acquisition, and that this can be done through interaction enhancement.

Wong (2003) drew learner's attention to formal features of L2 input through textual enhancement (TE). Numerous empirical studies demonstrated that increased attention to form can lead to more learning (e.g. Leow, 1998; Robinson, 1995). Wong's study investigates how TE as a form of input enhancement and increasing the comprehensibility of L2 input via simplified input (SI) (Van Patten, 1990, as cited in Wong, 2003), impacts adult L2 French learners' acquisition of French past participle agreement in relative clause constructions. Eighty-one participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: 1) exposure to TE and SI, 2) exposure to SI only, 3) exposure to TE only, and 4) exposure to unsimplified input without TE (comparison group). The participants were provided with three reading texts in French containing forms that were typographically altered to enhance their perceptual salience. SI was operationalized as providing participants with simplified versions of the three reading texts. Wong found that SI had a positive effect but not TE. Wong concluded that since the targeted grammatical feature had no communicative value in French, it might have negatively influenced the results of the study.

Lim (2001), in her FonF study, investigated how different types of FonF instruction affect L2 learning of the present perfect in English. Her participants, all from Korea, were divided into four groups who received different instructional treatments: 1) rule, 2) input enhancement, 3) rule + input enhancement, 4) input flood. The results demonstrated that the students who received rule instruction and visual enhancement of input scored better on the written production tests¹⁰ than the other groups in the short-term, but not in the long-term. The findings of her experiment lead us to question the role of attention and awareness in the SLA process.

4. The present study

The present study, while attempting to follow the framework set by Long (1991), and later refined by Ellis (2001), investigates how different types of instruction affect L2 learning of French grammatical structure. However, as Doughty and Williams (1998) pointed out, “there is considerable variation in how the term focus on form is understood and used ” (p.5).

In the present study, the three groups (FonF, FonM, FonFs) were exposed to a ‘planned focus on form’ since instruction, whether implicit or explicit, involved intensive attention to preselected forms: the auxiliaries *être* and *avoir* in the *passé composé*.

The present study uses a grammar consciousness-raising task in the FonF group to facilitate the acquisition of auxiliary selection in the *passé composé*. According to the literature in the field of foreign language instruction, a grammar consciousness-raising task is one of several teaching tools that can be used in a type of FonF instruction (Ellis, 1991; Fotos, 1994). It was hoped that learners would develop knowledge of the auxiliary selection in the *passé composé* and would become more aware of the feature in communicative input afterwards – a process that Sharwood Smith (1993) also see as essential for language acquisition. Similarly, according to Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, awareness of specific linguistic items in the input is necessary for language learning to occur. The FonM group received a treatment which included group work and activities that led learners to negotiate meaning in the target language only. The FonFs group received teacher-centered instruction and rules were explained in the students’ native language. The instructional treatment consisted in a systematic attention to the auxiliary selection in the *passé composé* in a traditional sense. To test whether instruction makes a difference — particularly in the acquisition of auxiliary selection — the present study used a control group which did not have any instructional input. The results of the control group will be compared to the FonF, FonFs, and FonM groups.

Finally, since it should be easier for more proficient learners to process grammatical form better than less proficient learners (Van Patten, 1990; 1996), I did the same experiment with beginning level groups and intermediate level groups to test whether there was a correlation between type of instruction and proficiency level of L2 learners.

I was primarily concerned with measuring grammatical accuracy rather than oral fluency.

5. Research questions

Based on the findings from the previously mentioned studies, this study investigated the following research questions :

1. Do differences in the types of instructional treatments lead to differences in language learning, as operationalized in the present study by written production

(composition task), grammatical ability (fill in the blanks task), and comprehension (grammaticality judgment task) in the short-term?

Based on the findings of Doughty (1991), I hypothesize the participants who receive either a FonF, FonFs, or FonM treatment will outperform the participants of the Control group – those who receive no instructional treatment – at both proficiency levels. Furthermore, the FonM group will outperform the FonFs and the Control groups on the composition task at both proficiency levels. The FonFs group will show better performance on the grammaticality judgment task at both proficiency levels.

2. Can raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms facilitate acquisition?

Based on Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis and Fotos and Ellis (1991, 1994), the FonF group will score as well, if not outperform, learners in the FonM group, who received a purely communicative treatment, on the composition task, at both proficiency levels. The FonF group will also show better performance than the the FonFs participants, who receive teacher-centered grammar explanations, on the fill-in-the-blanks task at both proficiency levels.

3. Do different types of instruction have different long-term effects?

Based on previous research (Ellis, 1994; 2001; Doughty, 1998), I hypothesize that the long term effect will be higher overall in the FonFs group than the FonF, FonM and control groups, in particular at the more advanced proficiency level.

II. METHOD

1. Participants

Participants were initially 138 English speaking L2 learners of French from the same university in Florida. 67 students were enrolled in four sections of an elementary (second semester) French language course (FRE1121). The four sections were taught by three different instructors. The remaining 71 students were enrolled in four sections of an intermediate (third semester) French language course (FRE2200). These four sections were taught by four different instructors. In order to be included in the final participant pool, the students from the 8 intact classes had to have been present for all phases of the experiment: for the pretest, the instructional treatment the following day, the post-test on the third day, and finally the delayed post-test, four weeks later. They also had to have produced at least six different verbs in French on each composition for the pre-, post-, and delayed post-test, in order to gather sufficient data to be analyzed. All students agreed to participate in the study, however, a total of 50 students did not complete all phases of the experiment and were thus removed from the experiment. Furthermore, since time is a variable, the six students who arrived either late (more than ten minutes in a fifty minute-class), on one of the test days, or on the day of instruction, were also removed from study. The final participant pool for this study was 80. Table 1 presents a summary of the participant pool across time and across sections. See Table 1 in Appendix A

The students did not receive funding for participating in the study. It was at the discretion of their respective instructors to decide whether they would be given extra-credit. They were all taught with a communicative approach. The amount of L2 French used in all eight sections varied with the instructors and the students.

Before the pre-test was administered to each section, all participants were asked to fill out a survey (see Appendix B) including basic demographics (such as age, sex, and native language), as well as years of French in High School, college semesters of French, travel abroad, other second languages than French, and self-graded proficiency in French measured on a 1-5 rating scale (1 being low and 5 high). Table 2 presents a summary of the survey. Table 3 displays the languages spoken by the participants who had more than two languages (L1 English and L2 French). See Table 3 in Appendix A.

Table 2. Summary of students' academic background by level

Levels	Mean age	High School (years)	College (semesters)	Travel abroad ^a	More than 2 languages _b	Proficiency ^c
French 1121	19.4	2.1	1.4	26.9%	44.8%	2.8
French 2220	20.5	2.7	1.6	28.4%	42.7%	3.0

^a = includes any travel outside the United-States for more than 10 days.

^b = percentage of participants who have learned other languages than English and French.

^c = Self-grade in overall proficiency in L2 measured on a 1-5 scale.

2. Target Forms

The target form selected for the study was French auxiliary selection in the simple past tense (*passé composé*). The *passé composé* is the most common past tense in French; it is used to relate actions or events completed in the past. The *passé composé* may be translated into English in three different ways depending on the context:

1) L'orage a détruit leur maison.
The storm AUX-be PAST-destroy their house.

{ The storm destroyed their house.
The storm has destroyed their house.
The storm did destroy their house.

The *passé composé* consists of two parts, the present tense of an auxiliary, or helping verb (either *avoir* or *être*), and a past participle. In most instances the auxiliary verb used is *avoir*. The past participle agrees with the subject in number and in gender only when the auxiliary *être* is used. The past participle also agrees in number and in gender with the direct object when it precedes *avoir*.

2) Marie et Claire sont allées au cinéma.
Marie and Claire AUX-be PAST-go to the cinema.

→ Marie and Claire went to the cinema.

3) Marie et Claire ont vu une comédie.
Marie and Claire AUX-have PAST-see a comedy.

{ They saw a comedy.

4) Elles l'ont beaucoup aimée.
They it AUX-be really PAST-like.

{ They really liked it.

Many intransitive verbs, that is, verbs not followed by a Noun Phrase object (direct or indirect), take *être* in the *passé composé*:

5) Hier soir, Paul est sorti au théâtre. → Last night, Paul went out to
Last night, Paul AUX-be PAST-go out the theater
to the theater.

Many of these verbs also denote a change in location:

6) Est-ce que tu es déjà allé en France? → Have you ever been to
INTERROG. PRONOUN you AUX-be ever France?
PAST-go to France?

7) Eléonore est partie aux Bahamas à Noël. → Eléonore went to the
Eléonore AUX-be PAST-go to the Bahamas Bahamas for Christmas.
for Christmas.

It is important to note that several intransitive verbs that also indicate a change in location, for instance, *courir* (to run) and *marcher* (to walk), do not use *être* but *avoir*.

Moreover, a few verbs conjugated with *être* do not indicate a change in location, but a change in state:

rester → to stay
devenir → to become
naître → to be born
mourir → to die

A mnemonic device often used in French classrooms to represent the intransitive verbs that take *être* in the *passé composé* is the *maison d'être*.¹¹ Figure 1 in Appendix C illustrates the *maison d'être*.

The reflexive verbs form another important group of verbs which use *être* as the auxiliary in the *passé composé*:

8) Pierre s'est promené dans le parc. → Pierre went for a walk in the
Pierre REFLEX. PRONOUN AUX-be PAST-go park.
for a walk in the park

A few intransitive verbs (*monter, descendre, sortir, passer, rentrer, retourner*) may sometimes take a direct object, thus becoming transitive. When they do, the auxiliary used is *avoir*, instead of *être*. They also change in meaning:

9) Stéphane est sorti. <i>Stéphane AUX-be PAST-go out.</i>	Stéphane went out.
Stéphane n'a pas sorti la poubelle. <i>Stéphane NEG. AUX-have NEG. PAST-take out the garbage.</i>	Stéphane did not take out the garbage.
10) Est-ce que tu es monté? <i>INTERROG. PRONOUN you AUX-be PAST-go up?</i>	Did you go up?
Est-ce que tu as monté ma valise? <i>INTERROG. PRONOUN you AUX-have PAST-take up my suitcase?</i>	Did you take up my suitcase?
11) Je suis descendu(e) du bus. <i>I AUX-be PAST-get off the bus.</i>	I got off the bus.
J'ai descendu l'escalier. <i>I AUX-have PAST-come down the stairs.</i>	I came down the stairs.
12) Pauline est passée devant chez lui. <i>Pauline AUX-be PAST-pass by his house.</i>	Pauline passed by his house.
Pauline a passé 3 examens hier. <i>Pauline AUX-have PAST-take3 tests yesterday.</i>	Pauline took 3 tests yesterday.
13) Il est retourné chez lui très vite. <i>He AUX-be PAST-come back home really fast.</i>	He came back home really fast.
Le cuisinier a retourné le poulet dans le four. <i>The cook AUX-have PAST-turn the chicken in the oven.</i>	The cook turned the chicken in the oven.
14) Je suis rentré(e) à minuit. <i>I AUX-be PAST-come at midnight.</i>	I came back at midnight.
La voisine a rentré ses plantes à cause du gel. <i>The neighbor AUX-have PAST-bring in her plants because of the frost.</i>	The neighbor brought in her plants because of the frost.

Thus, the auxiliary selection may be classified as a form of communicative value.

The participants in the elementary French sections had received formal exposure to the *passé composé* prior to this experiment. They were already taught all target

structures except the six verbs that can be transitive or intransitive in the *passé composé*, the most difficult concept of auxiliary selection to grasp for non-native speakers of French. The intermediate French sections had received formal exposure to all target structures before the start of the research project. Hence, the pre-test to evaluate the knowledge of the students in each section in both levels, seemed particularly important, especially when comparing their results on the pretest with the post-test, in order to see the effects of the instructional treatments the participants received.

3. Materials

The following materials were used to conduct this study: a consent form (see Appendix D), and language background survey, three similar but not identical tests which constituted the pre-, post-, and delayed post-test, and three distinct instructional treatments (Focus on Forms - FonFs, Focus on Meaning- FonM, Focus on Form - FonF). The pre-, post-, and delayed post-test utilized multiple outcome measures, some focusing on communicative ability, some focusing on grammatical accuracy, and some focusing on comprehension, to avoid bias in favor of one instructional treatment or another.

The instructors in each section were told that the focus of the experiment would be on the *passé composé*, but they were instructed not to inform their students at any time during the experiment. The researcher, in place of each instructor, gave all the tests and instructional treatments in the eight intact classes of elementary (FRE1121) and intermediate (FRE2200) French.

3.1. Pretest

Written tests were given to the participants. Since language classes usually last fifty minutes, the researcher designed a forty to forty-five minute pretest, allowing extra time for the participants to sign the consent forms and fill in the short language background questionnaires. The pretest ‘package’ distributed to each participant in the four sections of FRE1121 and the four classes of FRE2200 consisted of a free production task (a composition; CP task), a cloze task (a gap-filling test; FB task), and a grammaticality judgment task (GJ task).

3.1.1 Free production task. The participants were given twenty minutes to complete the composition, the topic of which required the use of the *passé composé*. The instructions in the packet asked the participants to produce a minimum of ten to twelve sentences with at least ten different verbs in the simple past. See Appendix E.

3.1.2. Cloze task. Once the initial twenty minutes had ended, the participants were given fifteen minutes to fill in the blanks of the second test with verbs in the French simple past tense. The reading passage included a total of sixteen verbs, with eight verbs used with the auxiliary *avoir*, and eight with the auxiliary *être*. The passage included two reflexive verbs, one verb in a negative sentence, the verb *sortir* used transitively in a

sentence and intransitively in another clause, and the verb *passer* also used transitively and intransitively in two different clauses within the passage. See Appendix E.

3.1.3. Grammaticality judgment task. After the cloze test, the participants were given ten minutes to complete the grammaticality judgment task. In this task, the students had to decide if the ten sentences they were given on the sheet were correct or incorrect. For each incorrect sentence, the participants had to correct it in the space provided below it. The grammaticality judgment task consisted of five correct and five incorrect sentences. These clauses included two verbs in interrogative sentences (hence with inversion of the auxiliary and the subject), one reflexive verb, the verb *monter* used transitively and intransitively in two different clauses, as well as the verb *descendre* also used transitively and intransitively. See Appendix E.

3.2. Treatments

The day following the pretest, the participants received a fifty-minute instructional treatment explicitly or implicitly (depending upon the group) addressing the targeted structures of the study. The researcher did not provide the participants with feedback on the pre-test. All three groups of elementary French received a fifty-minute instructional treatment on the same day, and the fourth section was used as the control group, and did not receive any instructional treatment on that day. The following week the more advanced French sections (FRE2200) went through the same three day experiment (pre test, treatment, post-test). The researcher randomly assigned intact classes to different groups. Each group in FRE1120 and FRE2200, differed in the following ways for the types of input.

3.2.1. Control group. One of the four sections of FRE1120 and one of the four sections of FRE2200 were randomly selected by the researcher to be used as the control group (intact class). Participants in that group were given the same pretest as all other sections of both French levels. The following day, the students of each control group in both levels received their normal classroom instruction given by their respective instructors teaching according to their syllabus. The third day, the participants of the control group were given the same post-test as all other sections. So, the control group differed from the other groups, only in that the group did not receive the instructional treatment.

3.2.2. Focus on FormS. In the FonFs groups, the students were taught the target structures with a traditional approach to grammar instruction. Participants received explicit grammar instruction and practice about auxiliary selection in the *passé composé*. The instruction was teacher-centered and rules were explained in the students' native language. The students were mostly passive, they learned the material presented by the researcher. Following the explanations, the participants performed drill activities and exercises designed by the researcher to help them master the target structures. The students transformed, combined elements in slash sentences, filled in blanks, but did not answer personalized questions. In these mechanical drills, there was only one correct

response each time. Although the learners did not have to attend to the meaning of the exercises to complete them, all drills were focused on traveling, in order to match the ‘traveling theme’ of the FonM and FonF groups. A formal debriefing component (explanation) and explicit negative feedback (the researcher/instructor corrects formally the mistakes of the students and provides them with metalinguistic explanations) was provided throughout the FonFs instruction. See Appendix F for the FonFs lesson plan and a sample of exercises and drills given in the FonFs treatment.

3.2.3. Focus on Meaning. In the FonM group, no attention was paid to the forms used to convey a message, the instruction was devoted to communication only (in the target language), on the theme of traveling. Communicative language teaching (CLT), based on the notion of communicative competence, asserts that the main objective of a second or foreign language program must be to provide language learners with the information practice needed to meet the communication needs in the second or foreign language (Canale, 1983). The focus of this approach is placed on the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. CLT guides language learners beyond memorized patterns to take part in meaningful interaction. The participants here, concentrated on conveying a message and not on performing auxiliary selection in the *passé composé* accurately. However, to maintain a certain balance among groups, the researcher provided topics that required the students to use the *passé composé* tense to convey a message and negotiate meaning with their peers. Implicit feedback (recasts with the appropriate corrections but without explanation of the mistakes¹²) was provided to the students throughout the FonM treatment. See Appendix G for the FonM lesson plan and a sample of activities given in the FonM treatment.

3.2.4. Focus on Form. FonF instruction is a balance between a FonFs and a FonM (Long, 1991). In the FonF group, grammar instruction and communicative language use were integrated through a grammar consciousness-raising task. The researcher focused learner’s attention on the auxiliary selection in the *passé composé* in the course of carrying out communicative activities. The grammar consciousness-raising task was a way to make the students negotiate meaning while focusing their attention on the targeted structures of the study. The grammar consciousness-raising task consisted of a reading passage (authored by the researcher) in which most of the verbs were in the *passé composé* (the passage described the vacation of a fictitious French family who visited New York City in 2001). The students had to respond in groups of three to questions on the reading passage. These questions focused the students’ attention on the use of auxiliary selection in French. Communicative activities followed. A debriefing and explicit negative feedback were provided throughout the FonF treatment. See Appendix H for the FonF lesson plan, and a sample of the reading passage as well as the activities given in the FonF treatment.

3.3. Post-test

The day following the treatment, post-tests were given to the eight sections of FRE1120 and FRE2200. The post-test was similar to the pretest but not identical. It also contained a free production task (composition), a cloze task (fill in the blanks) and a

grammaticality judgment task. The participants had the same amount of time as in the pretest to complete each task. The topics of each test varied from the topics on the pretest.

3.3.1. Free production task. The participants were also required to produce a minimum of ten to twelve sentences with at least 10 different verbs in the simple past. See Appendix I.

3.3.2. Cloze task. The reading passage of the post-test matched the length of the passage in the pretest as it contained the exact same number of words. Furthermore, it also included a total of sixteen verbs, eight verbs used with the auxiliary *avoir*, and eight with the auxiliary *être*. The passage of the post-test included comparable but different grammatical items from the pretest to exclude any increase in proficiency due to memory. It consisted of two different reflexive verbs (from the pretest), one different verb in a negative sentence (from the pretest), the verb *monter* used transitively in a sentence and intransitively in another, and the verb *descendre* also used transitively and intransitively in two different clauses within the passage. See Appendix I.

3.3.3. Grammaticality judgment task. The participants completed the grammaticality judgment task in the same conditions as they completed the pretest. Again, to avoid any increase of proficiency due to memory, the ten sentences were unlike the sentences in the pretest, and included comparable but different grammatical items from the pretest. These clauses included two different verbs in interrogative sentences, one reflexive verb, the verb *sortir* used transitively and intransitively in two different clauses, as well as the verb *passer* also used transitively and intransitively. See Appendix I.

3.4. Delayed Post-test

Four weeks after the treatment, delayed post-tests were administered to the eight sections of FRE1120 and FRE2200 to see if the proficiency gain was maintained and investigate whether types of instruction have different long-term effects. The delayed post-test was similar to the pre-, and post-test, but not identical. It also contained a free production task (composition), a cloze task (fill in the blanks) and a grammaticality judgment task. The participants had the same amount of time to complete each task. The topics of each test varied from the topics on the pre-, and post-test.

3.4.1. Free production task. The participants were also required to produce a minimum of ten to twelve sentences with at least ten different verbs in the simple past. See Appendix J.

3.4.2. Cloze task. The reading passage of the delayed post-test matched the length of the passages in the pre- and post-test as it contained the exact same number of words. Furthermore, it also included a total of sixteen verbs, eight verbs used with the auxiliary *avoir*, and eight with the auxiliary *être*. The passage of the delayed post-test included comparable but different grammatical items from the pretest to exclude any increase in proficiency due to memory. It consisted of two different reflexive verbs (from the pre-

and post-test), one different verb in a negative sentence (from the pre- and post-test), the verb *sortir* used transitively in a sentence and intransitively in another, and the verb *descendre* also used transitively and intransitively in two different clauses within the passage. See Appendix J.

3.4.3. Grammaticality judgment task. The participants completed the grammaticality judgment task in the same conditions as they completed the pre- and post-test. The clauses included two different verbs in interrogative sentences, one reflexive verb, the verb *passer* used transitively and intransitively in two different clauses, as well as the verb *monter* also used transitively and intransitively. See Appendix J.

The researcher of the present study decided to exclude the verbs *rentrer* and *retourner* from all the tests for two reasons. First, the communicative use of their transitive counterparts is not as frequent as the communicative use of the other four verbs *monter*, *descendre*, *sortir*, and *passer*. These four verbs are also used as frequently when they are transitive as when they are intransitive verbs in the perfect past tense. Second, most of the language textbooks (including the textbook used by FRE2200 sections) ignore the verbs *rentrer* and *retourner* and state that only the previous four verbs can be used transitively or intransitively in French.

4. Scoring

The same scoring measures were used in the pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests.

4.1. Free production task

Only the target items were scored. The maximum score was twelve. Only the first six different verbs in the composition were selected to be scored. Each verb was scored on a 0 to 2 point scale. Two points were awarded if the participant used the correct auxiliary (*avoir* or *être*, depending on the verb and the context) and the right conjugation of the auxiliary. Agreement mistakes on the past participles, since they are forms of no communicative value in French, were not scored. One point was awarded for the use of the correct auxiliary but misconjugated.¹³ The reverse (the use of the wrong auxiliary but well conjugated¹⁴) was not awarded a point, because the primary interest of the study was in the auxiliary selection before the grammatical accuracy of the auxiliary used. Thus no points were awarded for the use of the wrong auxiliary correctly conjugated, nor were points awarded for the use of the wrong auxiliary misconjugated.

4.2. Cloze task

The maximum score was thirty-two. Each verb was scored on a 0 to 2 point scale. The scoring measure was the same as for the composition.

4.3. Grammaticality judgment task

The maximum score was twenty-two. Each sentence was scored on a 0 to 2 point scale. For grammatical sentences, two points were awarded if a participant appropriately judged the grammaticality of a sentence. For ungrammatical sentences, two points were only awarded when the participants corrected the incorrect sentence appropriately (i.e. when they corrected the auxiliary only). One point was awarded if the participant appropriately judged the ungrammaticality of the sentence, but miscorrected it. Finally, no points were awarded if the participant did not appropriately judge the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of the sentence.

5. Analysis

In order to determine whether the various forms of instruction significantly affected the participants, the data were submitted to a series of analyses of variance (ANOVA) including a one-way ANOVA with repeated measures. The between participants factors were treatment (FonFs, FonM, or FonF and Control), and proficiency levels (FRE1120, indicated as level 1, and FRE2200, indicated as level 2). The within participants factors were time (pretest versus post-test), and type (composition – CP, fill in the blanks – FB, and grammaticality judgment task – GJ). All inferential statistics were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 10.0, employing a probability level for rejection of $p < .05$. To determine whether time, treatment, or type (CP, FB, GJ) had an effect, the researcher used a General Linear Model (GLM) with repeated measures. To compare the independent scores of the means of the pretest and post-test per task (CP, FB, and GJ) within each treatment and by proficiency level, the researcher used Paired Samples T-Tests.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the statistical analysis revealed a complex picture depending on treatment and type of task under study. The means for acquisition in each group (FonF, FonFs, FonM, control group) at time one (pretest) and time two (post-test) in elementary French (level 1) and intermediate French (level 2) are displayed in Table 4. Table 4 shows that the mean scores increased from the pre-test to the post-test regardless of treatment and proficiency level in most cases. Only the mean scores of the Control group on the three tasks at both proficiency levels and the FonM group on the composition and fill in the blanks tasks at the elementary level, and the grammaticality judgment task in level 2, did not increase from the pretest to the post-test.

For the pretest that occurred prior to treatment, the analyses of variance (ANOVA) demonstrated that the groups did not show a significant difference from each other at the elementary French level nor did they show any significant difference from each other at the intermediate level. Only the FonF at the elementary level showed a significant difference from the other groups on CP, FB, and GJ in the pretest ($F = 8.715$, $p = .009$; $F = 10.499$, $p = .005$; $F = 5.916$, $p = .026$). Except for this particular group, which scored less on the pretest than the other groups with regard to knowledge of the targeted grammatical features prior to the treatments, the intact classes in level 1 and 2 formed a homogeneous group.

Table 4. Means for treatment for task at Time one and Time two

Prof	Task	Treatment	Time one (pre-test)					Time two (post-test)				
			FonF	FonFs	FonM	Control	FonF	FonFs	FonM	Control		
	Composition	*	FPRCP	SPRCP	MPRCP	CPRCP	FPSCP	SPSCP	MPSCP	CPSCP		
1		Mean	56.67	77.78	80.21	95.83	58.34	92.59	80.21	86.46		
		N	10	9	8	8	10	9	8	8		
		Std. Dev.	33.518	22.048	33.315	7.717	25.153	19.295	35.617	14.730		
2		Mean	88.48	76.39	83.33	77.33	90.74	88.19	90.56	70.78		
		N	9	12	15	9	9	12	15	9		
		Std. Dev.	12.679	31.147	19.159	31.855	12.107	18.956	12.144	33.615		
	Fill-in-the-blanks	*	FPRFB	SPRFB	MPRFB	CPRFB	FPSFB	SPSFB	MPSFB	CPSFB		
1		Mean	48.75	69.79	66.80	71.49	66.25	74.65	66.80	71.10		
		N	10	9	8	8	10	9	8	8		
		Std. Dev.	30.017	12.204	31.336	12.437	27.275	12.927	23.262	5.965		
2		Mean	82.99	70.83	60.00	62.11	86.81	74.22	68.13	59.78		
		N	9	12	15	9	9	12	15	9		
		Std. D.	10.494	13.691	30.896	26.751	19.553	16.702	19.380	25.538		
	Grammaticality Judgment	*	FPRGJ	SPRGJ	MPRGJ	CPRGJ	FPSGJ	SPSGJ	MPSGJ	CPSGJ		
1		Mean	39.00	56.67	58.13	60.00	68.00	67.78	70.00	61.88		
		N	10	9	8	8	10	9	8	8		
		Std. D.	22.828	14.577	23.594	16.475	22.386	14.167	16.690	13.076		
2		Mean	64.44	63.75	65.00	55.56	78.89	80.42	65.00	53.89		
		N	9	12	15	9	9	12	15	9		
		Std. D.	22.700	13.505	11.339	7.683	20.429	9.405	10.522	8.298		

* F = Form treatment; S = Forms; M = Meaning; C = Control group; PR = pretest; PS = post-test; CP = composition; FB = Fill-in-the blanks; GJ = Grammaticality Judgment; ex.: FPRCP = Form group, pretest, composition

1. Research questions






1. Do differences in the types of instructional treatments lead to differences in language learning, as operationalized in the present study by written production (composition task), grammatical ability (fill in the blanks task), and comprehension (grammaticality judgment task) in the short-term?


2. Can raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms facilitate acquisition ?

3. Do different types of instruction have different long-term effects ?

The significant results ($p < .05$) in response to the three research questions are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Significant pre- to post-test gains by task and proficiency

Task	Prof	FonF	FonFs	FonM	Control
Composition	1	X		X	X
	2	X	X	X	X
Fill-in the blanks	1		X	X	X
	2	X	X	X	X
Grammaticality Judgment	1		X		X
	2	X		X	X

 = significant ($p < .05$)

X = non significant ($p > .05$)

2. Hypotheses

2.1. Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 in response to the first research question predicted that the FonF, FonFs and FonM groups at both proficiency levels would outperform the participants of the control group. When performing repeated-measure analyses of variance of accuracy

of the gains between pretest and post-test, the researcher encountered several problems in the primary analysis. The ANOVA could not be correctly performed on the gains for each group due to the small sample sizes of students and some inconsistencies in the results — such as a negative gain for the control group on the composition in proficiency 1 (i.e. the students in that group scored worse on the post-test than on the pretest). However, the descriptive statistics indicate that the instructed groups (FonF, FonFs, FonM) made more improvement than the control group at both proficiency levels, with pretest to post-test gains ranging from 2 to 27 points higher than those of the control group over this period. The means of the gains made from the pretest to the post-test by each group (FonF, FonFs, FonM, and Control group) in elementary and intermediate French are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of mean numbers of gains on the CP, FB, and GJ tasks

Task	Prof	Mean/N/ Std. Dev.	FonF	FonFs	FonM	Control
Composition	1	Mean N Std. Dev.	1.67 10 31.61	14.81 9 14.89	-.0004 8 14.77	-9.37 8 14.39
	2	Mean N Std. Dev.	3.70 9 7.34	13.88 12 21.14	9.44 15 13.68	-6.55 9 22.94
Fill-in the blanks	1	Mean N Std. Dev.	17.50 10 20.20	4.86 9 13.17	.00 8 9.88	-.39 8 13.71
	2	Mean N Std. Dev.	3.82 9 12.37	3.38 12 11.42	8.12 15 22.71	-2.33 9 6.46
Grammaticality Judgment	1	Mean N Std. D.	29.00 10 19.83	11.11 9 21.61	11.87 8 9.23	1.87 8 15.79
	2	Mean N Std. Dev.	14.44 9 32.15	16.66 12 9.37	.00 15 16.03	-1.66 9 7.00

Hypothesis 1 also predicted that the FonM group would outperform the FonFs and the Control groups on the composition task at both proficiency levels. This was not supported by a series of T-tests conducted on the pretest and post-test scores within groups in levels 1 and 2 ($p = 1.000$). Finally, the supposition that the FonFs group would

show better performance on the grammaticality judgment task was supported at the intermediate level. The FonFs group showed significant results on the GJ task in level 2 ($t = -6.159$, $df = 11$, $p < .001$).

These findings suggest that instruction does make a difference compared to non-instructed groups. The results also demonstrate that the FonM treatment did not increase the participants' French written production (as measured by a CP task) compared to the FonFs group and the control group. Finally, these findings suggest that the FonFs treatment had a positive effect on comprehension (as measured by a GJ task) at the intermediate level in the short-term.

The first research question addressed whether differences in the types of instructional treatments lead to differences in language learning as operationalized in the present study by written production (measured by a composition task), grammatical ability (measured by a fill-in-the-blanks task), and comprehension (measured by a grammaticality judgment task) in the short-term. The answer is positive. The results suggest that differences in the types of instructional treatments lead to differences in language learning. The FonF treatment had an effect on the grammatical ability of the participants (measured by a fill-in the blanks test) at the elementary level. This finding is consistent with other Focus-on-Form studies that have reported better ability for the learners to recognize and produce forms correctly when the researcher focuses learner's attention on a particular linguistic item in the course of carrying out communicative activities (Fotos, 1991, 1994; Ellis, 2001). According to Schmidt's (1990) Noticing hypothesis, awareness of specific linguistic items in the input is necessary for language learning to occur. Furthermore, the results suggest that treatment type will benefit the beginning learners more than the more advanced students.

Interestingly, the FonFs treatment, where students were mostly passive and performed drill activities and exercises, had a main effect on free written production at the elementary level. This finding may be attributed to several factors. First, the student sample in the FonFs group was, with only 9 participants, quite modest. This small sample might not be representative of other language learners, as some might differ in their cognitive abilities (skilled¹⁵ versus non-skilled language learners), or motivation. Second, since the composition was graded for accuracy, the participants of the FonFs group, who received explicit instruction on the targeted forms, might have been advantaged compared to the other instructed groups.

The three instructed treatments had a main effect on comprehension of auxiliary selection in the *passé composé* (measured by a Grammaticality Judgment task) at the elementary (FonF, and FonM) and the intermediate (FonFs) levels. What do these three respective instructional treatments have in common that leads to an increase in comprehension among all instructed participants?

The object of the FonM approach is interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. The researcher and instructor of the FonM group provided the students with topics that required them to use the *passé composé* to convey a message and negotiate meaning with their peers. In the FonFs group, participants received explicit grammar instruction and practice about auxiliary selection in the *passé composé*. Finally, the students who were taught with a FonF approach, received grammar instruction and communicative language use through a grammar consciousness-raising task. In these three treatments, whether implicitly (FonM), explicitly (FonFs) or along a consciousness

-raising continuum (FonF), instruction promoted noticing of the target forms. While most SLA researchers acknowledge the value of promoting noticing, some even consider it as a necessary condition for language learning to occur (Schmidt, 1990). Since comprehension usually occurs before production and the GJ task requires more passive knowledge of the grammar than does the FB task, this would perhaps explain why the three groups did so well on the GJ task but not on the CP and FB tasks.

2.2. Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 in response to the second research question supposed that the FonF group would score at least as well as the learners in the FonM group if not outperform them on the composition task in elementary and intermediate French. The series of T-tests indicated no significant difference between pretest and post-test within each group.

Hypothesis 2 also predicted that the FonF group would show better performance than the FonFs participants on the FB task at both proficiency levels. T-tests were performed, the results of which showed a significant main effect on the FB post-test in the FonF group (but not in the FonFs, the FonM, nor the control group) at the elementary level ($t = -2.738$, $df = 9$, $p < .05$). A comparison of the mean scores also clearly indicated that the FonF group performed better than the FonFs participants (with a gain of 13 points) on the FB task at level 1.

The overall results suggest that there was no main effect for instruction in the FonF and FonM groups on the composition task at either proficiency level. These findings also demonstrate that the FonF treatment had a main effect on grammatical ability (as measured by the FB task) at the elementary level.

The second research question asked whether raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms would facilitate acquisition. The results suggest that it facilitates grammatical ability and comprehension. The data of the present study also show that these effects are stronger with beginning learners.

2.3. Hypothesis 3

The supposition made in Hypothesis 3 indicating that the long term effect will be higher overall in the FonFs group than the FonF, FonM and control groups—particularly at the more advanced proficiency level—was not supported by the data. There was no learning advantage for any form of instruction over the longer period of time of the delayed post-test as opposed to short-term (post-test). No statistical analysis between tests for each group was performed since the independent mean scores of the delayed post-tests were very low.

These findings suggest that there was no learning advantage of any type of instruction over longer periods of time as opposed to short-term.

With reference to the third research question (do different types of instruction have different long-term effects?), the results of the statistical analysis suggest that they do not. However, since the procedure required a four-week-interval between the post-test and the delayed post-test, the researcher was constrained to give the delayed post-test the week immediately following the participants' Spring break (10 days). A lack of attention and comprehension of the students during their regular classroom instruction was also

reported by their respective instructors. This factor may have contributed to the lack of results in the delayed post-test for all participants at both proficiency levels.

IV. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A strength of this study is that it investigates the impact of three different instructional treatments on a type of form that had not been previously researched by focus-on-form studies: auxiliary selection in the *passé composé*. While many studies have investigated the effectiveness of focus-on-form instruction with EFL learners, and also numerous researchers have studied the aspectual distinction between *passé composé* and *imparfait* (another French past tense), very few have explored transitivity in French, a grammatical feature which, if acquired, can help French L2 learners to fully grasp the concept of auxiliary selection in the *passé composé*. However, in investigating only one type of form, the generalizability of this study's results is also limited. Therefore, future 'planned focus-on-form' studies need to investigate different forms and compare them to reach more general conclusions.

The lack of findings of the present study should not imply that focus-on-form instruction and the use of grammar-consciousness raising tasks is not a valid method to facilitate L2 French acquisition. The study was limited by its very small number of participants with an average of 9 participants per group. This small sample of learners might not be representative of other French L2 learners, as they may, for instance, differ in their cognitive abilities. All the groups were very heterogeneous, consisting of a mix of students who had previously traveled abroad (an average of 27% at the elementary level), others who never spent more than a week in a foreign country (72% at the intermediate level), and skilled and non-skilled learners (44.8% of the students in level 1 spoke more than two languages and similarly less than half of the participants - 42.7% - in intermediate French had learned other languages than English and French). These factors could shed light on why the results of the present study diverge from other focus-on-form experiments.

A further limitation is that it was not possible to remunerate the students for their participation in this research experiment. Lack of motivation may also have negatively influenced the results of the experiment and would explain some inconsistencies in the results such as losses from the post-test to the pre-test in the Control group.

For future research, I propose to replicate the study with a wider sample of learners, and score separately the skilled and non-skilled learners. The delayed post-test should also be given at a more appropriate time, avoiding any university break perhaps. Furthermore, in order to more appropriately measure communicative competence and syntactic development of the participants in each group, I propose to incorporate an oral interview component to the experiment in the future.

These questions remain to be investigated. More 'planned focus-on-form' research, which targets other additional grammatical features over longer periods of time for instructional treatments, is needed in order to further our understanding of how focus-on-form can be implemented in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the effectiveness of three different methods of instruction (FonFs, FonM, and FonF) and confirmed, what has been largely found by other focus-on-form studies (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2002; Doughty, 2001) that differences in the types of instructional treatments lead to differences in language learning, and that raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms facilitates acquisition to a certain extent.

Given the variation found in this study, it is important for researchers to further investigate and replicate other focus on form studies in order to appropriately generalize the findings to the classroom and identify how instruction can be best designed to promote L2 learning.

APPENDIX A

Participants

Table 1. Number of participants

	Initially	After the 4 phases (prt, tt, pst-, dpt)*	Loss of participants in percentage
French 1121	67	35	- 48 %
French 2220	71	45	- 37 %
TOTAL	138	80	- 42 %

* prt = pretest; tt = instructional treatment; pst = post-test; dpt = delayed post-test

Table 3. Third languages (other than English and French)

	Language	N
French 1121	Spanish	85%
	Latin	6%
	German	4.5%
	Farsi	3%
	Hebrew	1.5%
French 2220	Spanish	73%
	Italian	10%
	Latin	6.5%
	German	6%
	Hebrew	4.5%

APPENDIX B

Survey

1. Pseudonym (initials+ birth date, e.g. *BAT80*): _____
2. French class enrolled: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Sex: M F
5. Native Language: _____
6. Language(s) spoken at home: _____
7. How long have you been studying French (including High School and FSU) ? _____
8. Stays abroad? If so, where, when and for how long? _____
9. Do you know (or have you studied) one or more second languages? If so, where, when and for how long?

10. Please rate your French writing proficiency. (1= not literate and 5= very literate)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	
11. Please rate your French speaking ability. (1= not fluent and 5= very fluent)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	
12. Please rate your French reading proficiency (1= not literate and 5= very literate)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	

13. Please rate your French writing comprehension ability (1= unable to understand a written passage and 5= perfectly able to understand)

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | |

14. Please rate your French speech comprehension ability (1= unable to understand a conversation and 5= perfectly able to understand)

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | |

APPENDIX C

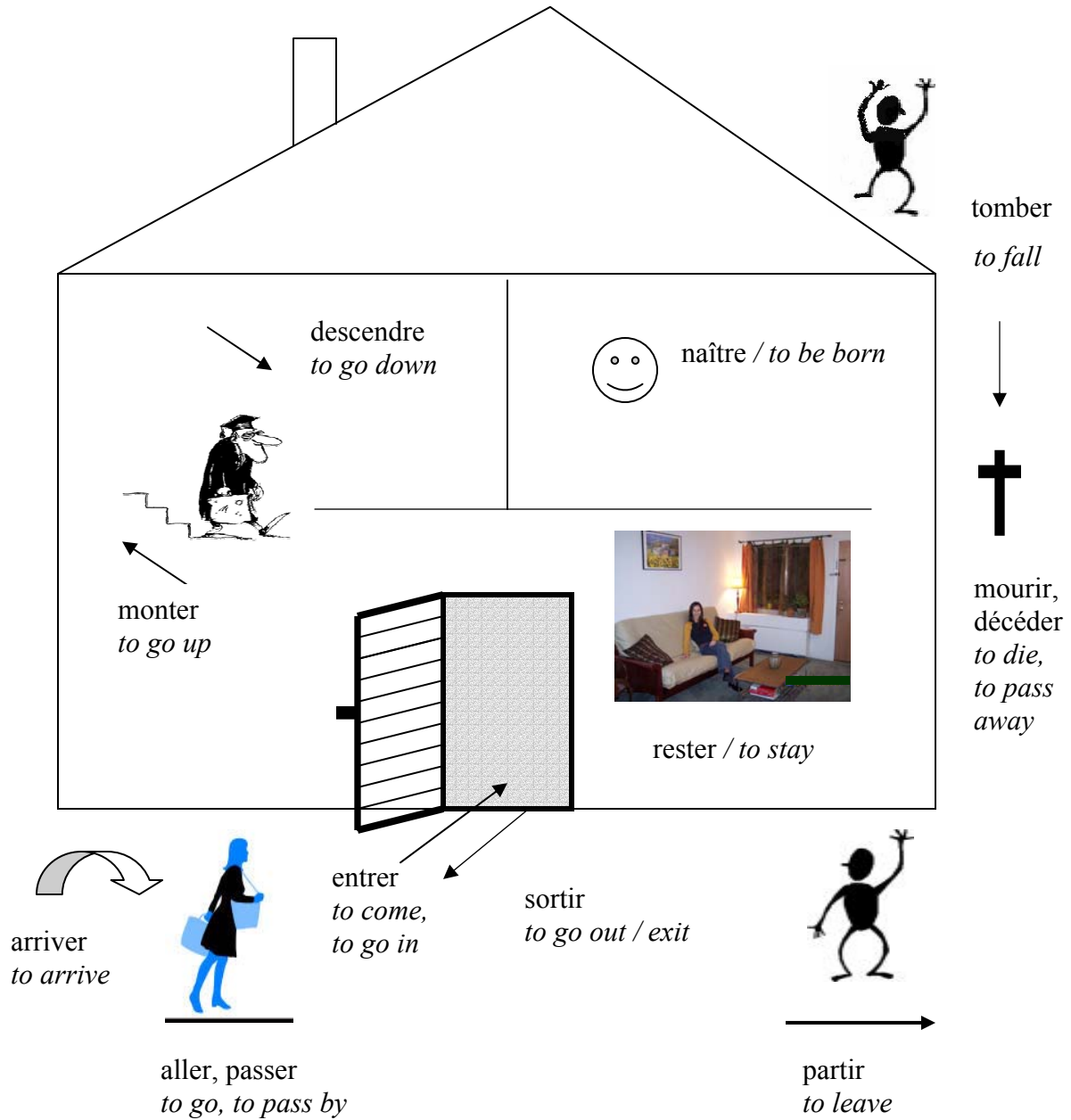


Fig. 1 The *maison d'être* (house of *aux-be*) includes verbs that take *être* in the *passé composé*.

APPENDIX D



Office of the Vice President
For Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Human Subjects Committee

Date: 2/2/2004

Virginie Dasse
1817 W Call St Apt I-11
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Dept.: **Modern Languages and Linguistics**

From: **John Tomkowiak, Chair** JT/ph

Re: **Use of Human Subjects in Research**
The Role of Form-Focused Instruction in L@ French Acquisition: The Case of Auxiliary Selection

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Exempt per 45 CFR § 46.101(b) 2 and has been approved by an accelerated review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If the project has not been completed by **2/1/2005** you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Dr James Mitchell
HSC No. 2002-700

I freely and voluntarily and without element of force or coercion, consent to be a participant in the research project entitled, "The Role of Form-Focused Instruction in L2 French Acquisition".

This research is being conducted by Virginie Dasse, who is a graduate student in French with a concentration in Second Language Acquisition and also a Teaching Assistant of French at Florida State University. I understand the purpose of her research project is to better understand the process of second language acquisition. In addition, this research will explore issues related to language teaching in the second-language classroom. I understand that if I participate in this project, I will be asked to complete an anonymous survey in which I will answer questions about the languages I speak, the languages I have learned or am learning, and the conditions under which I learned those languages. I will also be expected to participate in an oral interview with my instructor. I understand that this interview will be conducted outside of class.

I understand that my participation is totally voluntary and that I may stop participation at any time. All of my responses will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by the law and identified by a subject code number or pseudonym. My name will not appear on any of the results, although group and individual findings may be reported. If individual responses are reported, only my subject code number or pseudonym will link me to my responses. The researcher will never need to know my identity.

I understand there is a possibility of minimal level of risk involved if I agree to participate in this study. I might experience anxiety during the oral interview. However, I am also able to stop my participation at any time I wish. My grade will not be affected by not participating or by withdrawal prior to completion of the study.

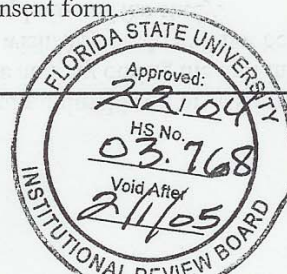
I understand there are benefits for participating in this research project. First, my own acquisition of French may be enhanced. Moreover, I will be providing those interested in improving language teaching with valuable information and data that could lead to redesigned curricula and textbooks for language teaching. Ultimately, my participation will shed light on the process of how second languages are acquired and how this process may be facilitated.

I understand that this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

I understand that I may contact Virginie Dasse, Florida State University, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, 137 DIF, (850) 644-5735, vd03@garnet.acns.fsu.edu or I may contact her FSU faculty advisor, Dr. James G. Mitchell, 367 DIF, (850) 644-8601, jgmitch@mailer.fsu.edu, with any questions I may have about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if I feel I have been placed at risk, I can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board, through the Office of the Vice President for Research, at (850) 644-8633. I understand that it may not be possible for my questions to be answered completely until the research study has concluded.

I have read and understand this consent form.

(Participant)



(Date)

Fill-in-the-Blanks task

Pseudonym = _____

Test 2: La journée de Paul

Fill in the blanks below by conjugating the verbs in the passé composé. You have 15 minutes to complete the task.

Lundi matin Paul _____ (se lever) à 11 heures 30 minutes, il _____ (ne pas entendre) son réveil sonner. Paul _____ (se laver) très vite. Paul _____ (prendre) son petit-déjeuner en 5 minutes seulement. Il _____ (quitter) la maison en bicyclette à 11 heures 45 minutes. Mais malgré tout, il _____ (arriver) en retard à l'université de la Rochelle. Quand Paul _____ (entrer) en classe de chimie, les étudiants _____ (dire) que le cours était fini.

Paul _____ (sortir) de la classe très en colère. Il _____ (retourner) en bicyclette chez lui. Paul _____ (sortir) son gros livre de sciences et il _____ (commencer) à étudier pour le prochain test de chimie. Il _____ (passer) 2 heures à étudier intensément* (**intensely*). Puis Paul, fatigué, _____ (partir) se promener avec des amis en ville.

Ils _____ (passer) devant un supermarché et Paul _____ (acheter) un nouveau réveil. Quelle terrible journée !

Grammaticality Judgment task

Pseudonym = _____

Test 3: Correct ou incorrect?

*Read the sentences below. Decide if they are correct or incorrect. Write (C) in front of the sentence if correct, or (I) if incorrect. If the sentence is incorrect, please **correct it** in the space provided **below** it. You have 10 minutes to complete the task.*

1. ___ Alice est montée les escaliers.
2. ___ Où est Alice ? Elle est montée au 2^{ème} étage.
3. ___ Est-ce que les enfants ont vu un film au cinéma ?
4. ___ Stéphane est fini ses devoirs.
5. ___ Les étudiants n'ont pas allé à la bibliothèque.
6. ___ Il a couru très vite à l'aéroport.
7. ___ A-t-il arrivé à 8 heures à Rio de Janeiro ?
8. ___ Paul n'est pas descendu de l'avion à 9 heures.
9. ___ On a descendu sa valise.
10. ___ Ils s'ont rencontré au café.

APPENDIX F

Focus-on-FormS treatment

- 5 minutes: Brief overview on the use of the passé composé and how to form the compound tense (passé composé with avoir [regular and irregular verbs], affirmative and negative sentences, questions). Use of a transparency.
- 10 minutes: Individual work activities I and II (exercises inspired from *Vis-à-vis*, beginning French Textbook). Recast and explicit negative feedback will be provided during the formal debriefing phase.
- 5 minutes : Formal explanation of the passé composé with the auxiliary être (intransitive verbs ; ‘maison d’être’ ; *descendre, monter, passer, and sortir* followed by a direct object that takes avoir in the passé composé). Use of a transparency.
- 10 minutes: Pair work activities III and IV. Recast and explicit negative feedback will be provided during the formal debriefing phase, metalinguistic feedback as well.
- 5 minutes : Explanation of the passé composé of pronominal verbs. Use of a transparency.
- 5 minutes : Individual activity V. Recast and explicit negative feedback will be provided during the formal debriefing phase
- 10 minutes: Pair work activity which includes all the previous grammatical features targeted. Formal debriefing. Conclusion.
- TOTAL : 50 minutes

Focus-on-FormS activities

I. Les vacances d'une famille de millionnaires français : Monsieur et Madame Euro

*Qu'est-ce que cette famille a fait pendant ses vacances aux Bahamas l'été dernier?
Faites des phrases complètes au passé composé.*

Modèle : **nous / acheter / cartes postale** → **Nous avons acheté des cartes postales**

1. Charles Euro / nager / océan / avec les requins
2. Madame Euro / perdre / son portefeuille
3. Nous/ dormir/ dans un hôtel de luxe / au bord (*shore*) de / mer
4. Les parents et les enfants Euro / ne pas manger/ poisson
5. est-ce que/ vous/ prendre/ beaucoup / photos ?

II. Une carte postale de la neige.

Complétez au passé composé la carte postale de Charlotte Euro pendant ses vacances de ski en Suisse l'hiver dernier.

Chère Céline,

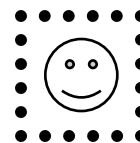
J(e) _____ mes vacances d'hiver
une semaine avant Noël avec Charles. Nous
_____ l'avion jusqu'en

Suisse. Nous _____
deux semaines à la montagne près de
Genève.

J(e) _____ du ski,
Charles _____ la télévision.

Notre séjour en Suisse
_____ inoubliable !

Je t'embrasse,
Charlotte



prendre
commencer
passer
être
faire
regarder

III. Des sorties.

Dites où ces personnes sont allées. Utilisez le passé composé.

Modèle : **il y a une semaine / Julien / aller / concert de rock à Paris** →
Il y a une semaine, Julien est allé à un concert de rock à Paris

1. il y a deux mois / Eléonore / partir / Cancun / pour les vacances de Noël
2. il y a dix jours / Charles et moi, nous / retourner / montagne
3. Eléonore/ sortir / de la discothèque /à 3 heures du matin
4. depuis 1 an/ nous/ ne pas tomber de cheval
5. est-ce que / tu / aller / à Paris / l'année dernière ?

IV. Week-end à New York.

Charles et Charlotte Euro ont passé le week-end à New York. Mettez l'histoire au passé composé et faites attention au choix de l'auxiliaire (avoir ou être).

Charles vient¹ chercher Charlotte pour aller à l'aéroport de Paris Charles-de-Gaulle. Ils montent² dans le concorde à 9 heures. Le concorde arrive³ à l'aéroport de New York JFK à 12h30. Charles et Charlotte descendent⁴ de l'avion et vont tout de suite à l'hôtel. Ils passent⁵ l'après-midi à visiter la ville sur l'île de Manhattan. Le soir, ils dînent⁶ dans un restaurant élégant. Dimanche, Charlotte va⁷ au Metropolitan Art Museum et prend⁸ beaucoup de photos de la ville. Charles reste⁹ à l'hôtel. Charles et Charlotte quittent¹⁰ New York en fin d'après-midi. Ils reviennent¹¹ à Paris fatigués mais contents de leur week-end.

V. Souvenirs de vacances.

Charlotte retrouve un vieil album de photos. Lisez son histoire puis racontez-la au passé composé.

Charlotte s'installe¹ pour regarder son album de photos. Elle s'arrête² à la première page. Elle se souvient³ de son premier amour à la plage Saint-George près de Tallahassee. Elle se demande⁴ où il habite aujourd'hui. Charlotte s'endort⁵ sur la page ouverte.

VI. Comment Charles est-t-il devenu millionnaire ?

Complétez par la forme correcte du verbe au passé composé.

A l'âge de 16 ans, Charles _____ (s'intéresser) à la danse classique. Un soir, il _____ (sortir) son plus beau costume, et il _____ (aller) voir un ballet à l'opéra de Paris. Il _____ (passer) deux heures à contempler les artistes : il _____ (avoir) envie de devenir un grand danseur lui aussi. Quand il _____ (sortir) de la salle d'opéra à la fin, un grand danseur _____ (passer) devant lui. Charles _____ (se tourner) vers le danseur et lui _____ (dire) : moi aussi je sais danser, laissez-moi vous montrer. Charles _____ (monter) dans la loge de l'artiste et il _____ (commencer) à danser. Charles _____ (beaucoup impressionner) l'artiste qui a décidé de l'engager immédiatement. Depuis Charles _____ (devenir) un grand danseur international !

APPENDIX G

Focus-on-Meaning treatment

- 15 minutes: Oral comprehension exercise (audio tape is played and then students respond to questions on the text). Debriefing with the written text so that students can check their listening comprehension.
- 10 minutes: Input: The teacher/researcher models the use of the passé composé for the students (the teacher describes what she did last weekend using as many different verbs in the passé composé as possible). Then, she involves the students by asking them what they did the weekend before.
Activité 2. Debriefing (the researcher asks for students' answers) but no formal feedback will be provided.
- 10 minutes: Activité 3. Debriefing (ask for students' answers) but no formal feedback will be provided.
- 5 minutes: Autograph activity (signe ici !)
- 10 minutes: Students have to describe the story of a fictitious family according to the drawings they see. Debriefing (the teacher asks for the student's answers) with implicit feedback and recast, will be provided.
- TOTAL : 50 minutes.

Focus-on-Meaning activities

Activité 1 : Un Week-end à New York.

Monsieur et Madame Charles et Charlotte Euro, un couple de millionnaires parisiens, passe le week-end à New York.

I. Ecoutez le passage audio-cassette puis dites si les phrases sont vraies (V) ou fausses (F).

1. Ils sont montés dans le concorde à 10 heures
2. Un bagagiste a descendu leurs valises de la limousine
3. Ils ont passé toute la journée à visiter la ville.
4. Charles est passé devant la statue de la liberté
5. Charlotte a monté son chien dans une cage fabriquée spécialement pour les voyages en concorde

II. Complétez les phrases suivantes.

- | | A | | B |
|----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
| 1. | ___ L'avion est | a. | sorti leurs plus beaux habits |
| 2. | ___ ils ont | b. | parti trente minutes plus tard |
| 3. | ___ il n'est pas..... | c. | regarder la télévision |
| 4. | ___ il a préféré... | d. | un chat siamois |
| 5. | ___ sa femme a acheté... | e. | sorti de l'hôtel |

III. Complétez la phrase. Encerclez la lettre de la bonne réponse.

1. Le concorde est arrivé à l'aéroport de New York JFK à _____.
a. 10h30 b. 0h30 c. 12h30
2. Sa femme a acheté un chat siamois pour seulement _____.
a. \$10 000 b. \$1000 c. \$100
3. Ils sont revenus à Paris _____.
a. relaxés b. heureux c. fatigues

Activité 2: Interview.

Posez des questions à un(e) camarade sur ces activités d'hier.

Voici des suggestions :

Le matin : se réveiller à..., se lever à..., dormir tard, faire du sport, regarder la télévision, prendre le petit-déjeuner à ..., etc.

L'après-midi : aller à l'université, étudier, inviter des amis, etc.

Le soir : regarder la télévision, se coucher, sortir avec des amis, etc.

Activité 3: Souvenirs de vacances.

Décrivez les vacances de l'année passée d'un(e) camarade. D'abord (first), posez les questions suivantes à votre camarade. Si vous voulez, posez encore d'autres questions.

Ensuite, présentez à la classe une description de ses vacances.

1. Quand es-tu parti(e) ? Quel moyen de transport as-tu pris ? Où es-tu all(é) ? Es-tu resté(e) aux Etats-unis ou es-tu allé(e) à l'étranger ? As-tu visité un endroit exotique ?
2. Es-tu allé(e) voir l'endroit où tes parents sont nés ? Où es-tu né(e) ?
3. Est-ce que c'était la première fois que tu es allé(e) à cette destination de vacances ?
4. Qu'est-ce que tu as fait pendant tes vacances ? Est-ce que tu as rencontré des gens intéressants ?
5. Comment es-tu rentré(e) : en avion ou en voiture ? Es-tu revenu fatigué(e) ?
6. Est-ce que tu as aimé cet endroit ? Est-ce que c'est un endroit que tu recommandes pour le visiter?

Activité 4: Signe ici! Les activités préférées.

Qui dans la classe

Signe ici !

a voyagé en première classe ?

est arrivé en retard à l'aéroport et a manqué son vol ?

est sorti de l'aéroport sans sa valise?

a perdu son billet de vol avant de prendre l'avion?

a sorti son passeport à la douane?

s'est perdu dans une grande ville?

a fait une croisière?

s'est fait arnaqué par un chauffeur de taxi ?

a visité un consulat ?

est monté dans l'avion à la dernière minute ?

APPENDIX H

Focus-on-Form treatment

- 20 minutes: In groups of 3, students respond to 5 questions on the reading passage. These questions will focus the students' attention on the use of the auxiliary selection in French. Formal debriefing with implicit negative feedback.
- 5 minutes: Formal explanation of the passé composé. Use of transparencies (1, 2 and 3)
- 10 minutes : Activité 1. Recast and explicit negative feedback
- 10 minutes: Activité 2. Recast and explicit negative feedback
- 5 minutes : Activité 3. Recast and explicit negative feedback
- TOTAL : 50 minutes

Focus-on-Form activities

Activité 1: Un Week-end A New York.

Monsieur et Madame Charles et Charlotte Euro, un couple de millionnaires parisiens, passent le week-end à New York.

Charles est venu chercher Charlotte pour aller à l'aéroport de Paris Charles-de-Gaulle. Ils sont montés dans le concorde à 9 heures. L'avion est parti trente minutes plus tard. Le concorde est arrivé à l'aéroport de New York JFK à 12h30. Charles et Charlotte sont descendus de l'avion et sont tout de suite allés à l'hôtel. Une fois arrivés au Royal Hotel, un bagagiste¹ a descendu leurs valises² de la limousine. Ils ont passé l'après-midi à visiter la ville sur l'île de Manhattan. Le soir, ils ont sorti leurs plus beaux habits pour aller dîner dans un restaurant élégant. Dimanche, Charlotte et Charles se sont quittés pour la journée. Charlotte a visité le Metropolitan Art Museum. Elle est passée devant la statue de la liberté mais elle n'a pas voulu s'y arrêter car elle a le vertige. Charles ne s'est pas promené : il n'est pas sorti de l'hôtel, il a préféré regarder la télévision et se relaxer dans le jacuzzi de l'hôtel. Sa femme a acheté un chat siamois pour seulement dix mille dollars. Elle a promené son chat dans Central Park. Charles et Charlotte ont quitté New York en fin d'après-midi. Charlotte a monté son chat dans une cage fabriquée spécialement pour les voyages en concorde. Ils sont revenus à Paris fatigués mais contents de leur week-end.

1 luggage handler

2 luggage

Observez et répondez aux questions suivantes :

1. Quelques verbes ont un auxiliaire différent d'*avoir* au passé composé. Quel est cet auxiliaire?
2. Faites une liste des verbes qui ont l'auxiliaire *avoir* et une liste des verbes qui ont l'auxiliaire *être*. Comparez vos 2 listes.
3. Quels types de verbes prennent l'auxiliaire *être*?
4. Est-ce que le complément d'objet direct joue un rôle dans la sélection de l'auxiliaire?
5. Tirez des conclusions générales sur la sélection de l'auxiliaire *avoir* ou *être* au passé composé.

Activité 2: Les voyageurs.

Ces personnes sont allées en Europe. Vous voulez connaître tous les détails du voyage. Avec un(e) camarade de classe, formulez des questions complètes et donnez des réponses originales.

Modèle : Jacqueline / partir le 19 juin

Etudiant 1 : Est-ce qu'elle est partie le 19 juin à Rome?

Etudiant 2 : Non, elle n'est pas partie le 19 juin, parce qu'elle a perdu son passeport.

1. Marc / rester une semaine à Nice
2. tu / déjà aller en Europe
3. Emma / retourner en Italie
4. Marianne et David / passer par la Suisse
5. tu/ sortir ton chien / quand il fait -5 Fahrenheits.
6. vous/ passer l'examen final le semestre dernier

Activité 3: Souvenirs de vacances.

Décrivez les vacances de l'année passée d'un(e) camarade. D'abord (first), posez les questions suivantes à votre camarade. Si vous voulez, posez encore d'autres questions. Ensuite, présentez à la classe une description de ses vacances.

7. Où es-tu all(é) ? Quand es-tu parti(e) ? Quel moyen de transport as-tu pris ? Es-tu resté(e) aux Etats-unis ou es-tu allé(e) à l'étranger ? As-tu visité un endroit exotique ?
8. Est-ce que c'était la première fois que tu es allé(e) à cette destination de vacances ?
9. Qu'est-ce que tu as fait pendant tes vacances ? Est-ce que tu as rencontré des gens intéressants ?
10. Comment es-tu rentré(e) : en avion ou en voiture ? Es-tu revenu fatigué(e) ?
11. Est-ce que tu as aimé cet endroit ? Est-ce que c'est un endroit que tu recommandes pour le visiter?

Activité 4 : Interview.

Posez des questions à un(e) camarade sur ces activités d'hier. Voici des suggestions :

Le matin : se réveiller à..., se lever à..., dormir tard, faire du sport, regarder la télévision, prendre le petit-déjeuner à ..., etc.

L'après-midi : aller à l'université, étudier, inviter des amis, etc.

Le soir : regarder la télévision, se coucher, sortir avec des amis, etc.

Fill-in-the-Blanks task

Pseudonym = _____

Test 2: Le Noël de Pauline

Fill in the blanks below by conjugating the verbs in the passé composé. You have 15 minutes to complete the task.

Pour Noël, Pauline, _____ (aller) voir sa famille d'accueil* (**host family*) aux Etats-Unis. Elle _____ (passer) 10 jours à Jacksonville.

Les parents de Pauline _____ (rester) en France. Pauline _____ (arriver) à Jacksonville le le 23 décembre 2001. Elle _____ (adorer) son séjour.

Le 24 décembre au matin, Steve _____ (monter) le sapin de Noël* (**Christmas tree*). Pauline et Linda _____ (décorer) le sapin. Le soir, ils _____ (sortir) à l'église pour la messe de minuit* (**midnight mass*). Le 25 décembre, Pauline _____ (se réveiller) à 8 heures. Elle _____ (s'habiller) très vite. Pauline _____ (ne pas ouvrir) tous les cadeaux* (**gifts*): Linda et Steve _____ (monter) en voiture avec Pauline quelques minutes plus tard pour visiter les grand-parents. Quand ils _____ (descendre) de voiture, il _____ (commencer) à neiger* (**to snow*). Pauline _____ (descendre) les cadeaux pour les grand-parents et ils _____ (dire) Joyeux Noël!

Grammaticality Judgment task

Pseudonym = _____

Test 3: Correct ou incorrect?

*Read the sentences below. Decide if they are correct or incorrect. Write (C) in front of the sentence if correct, or (I) if incorrect. If the sentence is incorrect, please **correct it** in the space provided **below** it. You have 10 minutes to complete the task.*

1. ___ Marie a sorti hier soir.
2. ___ Est-ce que ses parents sont partis en vacances ?
3. ___ Tu n'es pas fini le petit-déjeuner.
4. ___ Vous êtes sorti votre chien ce matin.
5. ___ Virginie est née en 1977.
6. ___ Nous sommes passés par Atlanta pendant notre voyage Philadelphie Tallahassee.
7. ___ Je m'ai endormi au cinéma.
8. ___ je n'ai pas passé le SAT pour rentrer à l'université.
9. ___ On a chanté la Marseillaise le 14 juillet.
10. ___ Est-t-elle mangée du poulet aujourd'hui ?

Fill-in-the-Blanks task

Pseudonym = _____

Test 2: Le week-end de Benoit à Paris

Fill in the blanks below by conjugating the verbs in the passé composé. You have 15 minutes to complete the task.

Samedi matin, Benoit _____ (ne pas sortir), il _____ (rester) à la maison. Il _____ (dormir) jusqu'à 10 heures. Benoit _____ (prendre) son petit-déjeuner avec sa sœur, Amélie. Ils _____ (se reposer) toute la matinée. L'après-midi, Benoit _____ (sortir) son parapluie* (**umbrella*) pour aller en ville, à cause de l'orage* (**thunderstorm*). Il _____ (retrouver) un ami au café. Puis Benoit et ses amis _____ (monter) en haut de la Tour Eiffel. Quelle jolie vue!

Benoit et ses amis _____ (descendre) les 500 escaliers de la Tour Eiffel en 1 heure seulement. Ensuite ils _____ (aller) manger dans un restaurant. Benoit _____ (rentrer) à la maison à minuit. Il _____ (s'endormir) tout de suite.

Dimanche matin, Benoit et Amélie _____ (faire) le ménage* (**clean up*) : Benoit _____ (passer) l'aspirateur et Amélie _____ (descendre) dans le garage pour laver la voiture. L'après-midi, Benoit _____ (étudier) à la bibliothèque.

Grammaticality Judgment task

Pseudonym = _____

Test 3: Correct ou incorrect?

*Read the sentences below. Decide if they are correct or incorrect. Write (C) in front of the sentence if correct, or (I) if incorrect. If the sentence is incorrect, please **correct it** in the space provided **below** it. You have 10 minutes to complete the task.*

1. ___ Est-t-elle vu un film au cinéma aujourd'hui ?
2. ___ Nous avons lu un livre très intéressant.
3. ___ Est-ce que ses parents sont morts dans un accident de voiture en 1989?
4. ___ On est monté ses bagages dans le train.
5. ___ tu as revenu de Dijon lundi dernier.
6. ___ Nous sommes passés devant* (*in front of) toi sans te voir
7. ___ Je m'ai marié en été.
8. ___ je suis montée en haut de la statue de la liberté.
9. ___ Vous êtes passé un examen de biologie
10. ___ Céline est venue me voir.

NOTES

¹ See Krashen (1985)

² Functional grammarians like Givón (1979) and Halliday (1978) treat form and function as inseparably linked. Their views contrast sharply with Chomsky's, who considers that language should not be viewed as a tool of communication, specifying that it is often used for non-communicative purposes, such as thinking.

³ According to Long's (1991) definition, 'meaning-oriented instruction' can be characterized by a Focus on Form

⁴ According to Long's (1991) definition, 'rule-oriented instruction' can be characterized by a Focus on FormS

⁵ Dative alternation refers to the position of the indirect object in the sentence. For instance: I gave her the book / I gave the book to her

⁶ see Long (1991)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For instance the teacher would repeat what the student said but with the necessary corrections.

Ex.: *Student*: I have 20 years old.

Teacher: oh, you **are** 20 years old!

¹⁰ The participants had to fill in the blanks of a reading passage with appropriate verb forms in the present perfect, past tenses, and other tenses used as fillers by the researcher.

¹¹ Another mnemonic device often used to memorize this category of verbs is the acronym *Dr & Mrs Vandertramp*, which letters stand for each verb with *être* in the *passé composé*

¹² Example provided in footnote 6.

¹³ For instance: **il es allé au cinéma hier* (he went to the cinema yesterday) instead of *il est allé*.

¹⁴ For instance: **il a allé au cinéma hier* (he went to the cinema yesterday).

¹⁵ In the present study, a student is considered a skilled language learner if s/he has learned more than two languages (other than L1 English and L2 French). A non-skilled language learner, in the present study, is a student who has only 2 languages (English and French).

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Virginie Dasse, Master's candidate in French with a concentration in Second Language Acquisition, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1540; (850) 644-3727, vd03@fsu.edu. Research interests: Second Language Acquisition, Foreign Language Pedagogy.

Virginie Dasse was born in March, 19th, 1977. As a French national, she received her Bachelor's degree at the University of Montpellier, France in Applied Linguistics and Translation in English and German. Ms Dasse spent several years abroad, as a college student in Leipzig, Germany, a graduate French instructor in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and a press analyst in Berlin, Germany. Following the completion of her M.A. degree, Ms. Dasse will continue her study of French SLA through the Ph.D. program in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching at the University of Arizona, Tucson.