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DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH GRAMMAR USAGE THROUGH THE ACCELERATIVE INTEGRATED METHOD

Amanda L. Joubert
Western University

DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH GRAMMAR USAGE THROUGH THE ACCELERATIVE INTEGRATED METHOD

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Amanda L. Joubert

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School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

This study investigates the *Accelerative Integrated Method's* (AIM) effectiveness for teaching French grammar in core French (CF) settings. The researcher conducted case study research in a CF classroom, using the *Communication Orientation of Language Teaching* (COLT) checklist for observation and performing an in depth grammatical analysis of 3 students' written stories. Students demonstrate acceptable use of the grammatical forms expected at their level by provincial standards, excepting the observation of gender and number agreement between words. Definite article agreement appears particularly weak. Students, however, exceed provincial standards for producing complete sentences and show signs of acquiring native-like French expressions. These findings are presumed to be a result of AIM's focus on oral fluency. The researcher discusses the role of grammar correction in language learning, and recommends that future research investigate whether gender agreement errors are corrected further on in the AIM program.

Keywords: second language learning, second language teaching, core French, French and Grammar, *Accelerative Integrated Method*, case study

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, whose support and encouragement has carried me through this educational pursuit.

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Table of Contents

Certificate of Examination		ii
Abstract		iii
Dedication		iv
Acknowledgments		v
Table of Contents		vi
List of Tables		viii
List of Appendices		x
List of Abbreviations		xi
Chapter 1:	Introduction	1
	Theoretical Framework	8
Chapter 2:	Background Literature	17
	Background Information	17
	FSL Teaching in Canada	18
	The Multidimensional Curriculum	21
	The National Core French Study	25
	Theories	29
	Cognitive Theory	29
	Experiential Model	31
	Theoretical Debates	32
	Theories in Practice	37
	The Accelerative Integrated Method	41
	Conclusion	49
Chapter 3:	Methodology	54
	Rationale	54
	Case Study Research	54
	Recruitment	56
	Materials	59
	Data Analysis	63
Chapter 4:	Findings	67
	Individual Students' Grammatical Skills	67
	The Below Average Student: Carol	67
	The Average Student: Barry	72
	The Above Average Student: Avery	79
	Trends among all three Students	91
	Grammatical Trends	92
	Student Performance by Grade Level	93
	Trends Influenced by Phonological Factors	94
	Findings that relate to Maxwell's findings	98
	Summary of COLT findings	100
	Summary of Findings	102

Chapter 5:	Discussion	104
	Individual Student Analysis	104
	Student Knowledge per Grade Level	117
	Other FSL Studies	119
	Findings and L2 Theory	121
	Conclusion	130
Chapter 6:	Conclusion	132
	Summary	132
	Implications	134
	Recommendations	137
	Future Research	138
	Limitations	140
	Closing Comments	142
References:		143
Appendices:		150
Vita:		181

Chapter 6:	Conclusion	132
	Summary	132
	Implications	134
	Recommendations	137
	Future Research	138
	Limitations	140
	Closing Comments	142
References:		143
Appendices:		150
Vita:		181

List of Tables

Table 4.1.1:	Summary of coding results for Carol	68
Table 4.1.1.1a:	Carol's correct conjugation of *er* verbs	69
Table 4.1.1.1b	Carol's Incorrect conjugation of *er* verbs	69
Table 4.1.1.2a	Carol's inappropriate word use	70
Table 4.1.1.2b	Carol's spelling errors	71
Table 4.1.1.2c	Carol's incorrect accent use	72
Table 4.1.2	Summary of coding results for Barry	73
Table 4.1.2.1a	Barry's use of correct word order	74
Table 4.1.2.1b	Barry's incorrect use of word order	74
Table 4.1.2.1c	Barry's correct use of er verbs	76
Table 4.1.2.2a	Barry's incorrect use of er verbs	77
Table 4.1.2.2b	Barry's incorrect accent usage	78
Table 4.1.2.2c	Barry's incorrectly spelled words	78
Table 4.1.2.2d	Barry's use of contractions	79
Table 4.1.3	Summary of coding results for Avery	80
Table 4.1.3.1a	Avery's use of correct word order	81
Table 4.1.3.1b	Avery's use of incorrect word order	82
Table 4.1.3.1c	Avery's correct use of contractions with prepositions	83
Table 4.1.3.2a	Avery's correct use of prepositions	84
Table 4.1.3.2b	Avery's incorrect use of prepositions	85
Table 4.1.3.2c	Avery's misspelled words	86
Table 4.1.3.2d	Avery's inappropriate word use	86

Table 4.1.3.2e	Avery's correct use of *ir* and *re* verbs	87
Table 4.1.3.2f	Avery's incorrect use of *ir* and *re* verbs	87
Table 4.1.3.2g	Avery's correct *er* verbs in the present tense	88
Table 4.1.3.2h	Avery's incorrect *er* verbs in the present tense	89
Table 4.1.3.2i	Avery's incorrect accent use	90
Table 4.2	Coding results for all three students	91
Table 4.2.2	Student performance by grade level	93

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Passeport Français 150

Appendix B: Horizons 151

Appendix C: On y va 152

Appendix D: Visages 153

Appendix E: Mutimodal Tools 155

Appendix F: COLT Checklist Part A 156

Appendix G: Complete Code list 157

Appendix H: Carol's Story 159

Appendix I: Barry's Story 160

Appendix J: Avery's Story 161

Appendix K: Carol's Homework 163

Appendix L: Barry's Homework 166

Appendix M: Avery's Homework 169

Appendix N: Ethics Approval Form 172

Appendix O: Information and Consent Forms 173

List of Abbreviations

AIM Accelerative Integrated Method

CF Core French

COLT Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching

FSL French as a Second Language

L1 First Language

L2 Second Language

PDL Paired Down Language

SLA Second Language Acquistion

TL Target Language

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Since my years as a grade school student, I have heard laments from parents, teachers, and peers that Core French (CF) programs are a waste of time and do not achieve their goals. Having decided to become a French teacher, I felt the urgency to find a program that would more effectively teach students French. To identify such a program, I needed to know what methods and tools have been supported by research to be effective and to what degree these tools are being implemented in core French programs.

Considering the many factors that influence language learning and the complexity of language itself, it is small surprise that researchers and language experts advocate a wide spectrum of second language (L2) teaching approaches. Some promote an analytic approach, wherein parts of the language are studied and practiced in structured exercises (McLaughlin, 1987). Others argue that an analytic approach is ineffective, and maintain instead that a communicative approach, one in which the language is learned through exposure and experience, is desirable. The role of grammar in L2 acquisition plays a key role in this debate: Most theorists either consider grammar as a central element to study for language learning, or as the most important aspect of language to avoid in the L2 classroom. Krashen (1983, 1997, 2007) and Truscott (2007), for example, believe that communicative experiences are the key to language learning, and that studying grammar hinders the development of a student's L2 competency. They strongly promote intuitive language learning through exposure, reasoning that grammar does not hold a place in the curriculum, since

students are not able to apply what they learn through explicit grammar instruction in communicative situations (Truscott, 2007; Krashen, 1998). Like Krashen and Truscott, Lyster (1990), and Swain (1985) hold that exposure to and experience communicating in the second language is critical to language development. Concerning the role of grammar in language acquisition however, Lyster (1990, 2007) and Swain (1985, 2006) argue against Krashen and Truscott's strictly communicative views, asserting that an understanding of grammar is essential to effective communication and does not develop without instruction, practice, and feedback. Lyster (1990) explains that the key to effective grammar instruction lies in teaching grammar within meaningful contexts, since this helps ensure that students can apply their learning to new situations. Feedback on student's use of grammar is also important as it helps them refine their understanding of grammar concepts and works to prevent the development of incorrect grammar habits (Lyster, 2007). Swain (1985, 2006) accepts Krashen's view that exposure to the target language is essential, but she adds that student output is also necessary, and that students need feedback on their output in order to refine their understanding of the language. Truscott (1999) opposes Lyster (2007) and Swain's (1985, 2006) views regarding feedback. He claims that feedback damages students' self confidence and does not remove their errors. Similarly, Krashen (1998) disagrees with Swain's proposal of comprehensible output, stating that it is unnecessary and does more harm than good.

Many tools have been used as aids to second language learning because of their perceived merit in L2 classrooms, among them songs, games, gestures, storytelling, drama, movement, visuals, computer software, and the Internet. The following is a brief description of various tools that researchers have reported to be useful for aiding L2 acquisition.

Cultural or theme-based songs have been used to teach important vocabulary and to practice pronunciation. Ayotte (2004) maintains that songs may be useful for learning vocabulary "because of their rhythmic, patterned and melodic elements that facilitate memorization" (p. 20). Richard-Amato (1996) also promotes the use of songs and musical chants, explaining that they allow for playful exploration of words and facilitate internalization of phrases and patterns without "painful" drill exercises. Ayotte (2004) conducted a study to determine whether or not songs aid in learning verb tenses. Her study, conducted with 2 experimental groups, revealed that students enjoy the songs and are more motivated to learn through song, but that the songs did not help at all in learning verb tenses. Music simply provides them exposure to the language in a mode that they enjoy. But Chamberlain, (cited in Ayotte, 2004), argues that this is not desirable and that songs must be used purposefully to teach a particular aspect of language in order for them to be effective teaching tools.

Some language instructors have reported success with video as a pedagogical tool in language learning since it allows students to hear authentic language as well as view cultural and contextual clues that may aid comprehension (Baltova, 1999a). Baltova believes that optimal learning with

video takes place with authentic films designed for native speakers with added subtitles. She explains that while oral speech often passes too quickly for the learner to process and is difficult to segment into individual comprehensible words, visual text allows the learner more time to process the meaning and presents the message with words already segmented, which facilitates comprehension. Although subtitles are not displayed for long, they still provide language learners with this aid. Subtitles allow the learner to compare oral speech to its written form and provide an opportunity to make meaning using both modes.

Baltova (1999a, 1999b) researched the utility of videos with both English and French subtitles in assisting in second language acquisition. In her study, students who watched videos with subtitles showed an increase in vocabulary and content comprehension. Baltova (1999b) suggests that "simultaneous exposure to spoken language, printed text, and supporting visuals, all conveying the same meaning will create a better learning environment for L2 learners than regular (unsubtitled) video or...written language, even when accompanied by visuals" (p. 35). However, Baltova concedes that "our awareness that contextual support, such as visual aids, can assist content in L2 learning is still greater than our knowledge of how to use such support in the most effective ways" (Baltova, 1999b, p. 32).

Richard-Amato (1996) discusses the value of storytelling, drama, and role-play in a second language classroom. She suggests that these multimodal pedagogies have particular value for second language learners, because they

lower anxiety levels and increase motivation to participate. Storytelling and drama provide an engaging means for students to practice their comprehension and communication skills.

Visual aids may also appear in the form of pictures, facial expressions, or gestures. Met (1994) encourages the use of such clues, explaining that "body language, such as gestures or facial expressions, link language to meaning" which is a critical factor to learning in second language classrooms (p. 168). McCafferty (2006) conducted a study in which students learned the language by accompanying language with gestures that articulated beats and rhythm in the target language. Although this technique seems rather unnatural, according to McCafferty's (2006) study results, this gesturing technique has been found to improve recall, processing, and comprehension of information. Gesture appears to be effective in two ways. First, it is a visual aid that helps students comprehend meaning. Second, when used to show beats in oral language, gesture can also aid in developing an understanding of the language and in recalling meaning.

It is evident that multimodal pedagogies enhance learning in second language classrooms. This is probably due to their multifaceted nature: students are provided with multiple means of understanding in a context where their usual means of understanding and communicating are not sufficient. Tools such as video, gesture, drama, and visuals equip students with multiple means of deciphering the target language.

Having highlighted the research findings concerning effective L2 methodologies and teaching tools, we can take a look at French programs in Canada. An examination of Canadian French programs reveals that a highly analytic approach has dominated CF curricula, particularly before the 1990s. Stern (1982), an influential language expert, reviewed core French programs used across Canada in the early 80s and noted that programs used mainly grammar exercises to teach French as a second language (FSL). Speaking and listening exercises were also oriented toward mastering vocabulary and grammar elements rather than using French to communicate meaningfully. As this highly analytic approach to language learning was not proving effective for the majority of FSL learners, Stern (1983) sought alternative approaches. He later proposed the multidimensional curriculum, a more balanced curriculum where grammar played a lesser role in language learning as it was only one focus among many; including communication skills, culture, and general language learning (Stern, 1983). In addition, these other elements were to be integrated in the classroom rather than taught in isolation. The implication is that grammar should be taught within communicative or cultural contexts, not in isolation as drills. Allen (1983), and Lyster (1990) supported Stern's idea of a balanced and integrated curriculum. However, despite recommendations by language experts such as Stern, Allen, and Lyster that programs must integrate analytical elements in communicative contexts, many FSL programs in the 80s and early 90s remained heavily analytical, with occasional communicative snippets on the side. The ineffectiveness of core French programs did not go unnoticed, however, and from

1985 to 1990, the National Core French Study (NCFS) (Harley, d'Anglejan and Shapson, 1990) assessed the nature of core French programs in Canada as well as their effectiveness. The NCFS results reflected Stern's (1983) observations, describing programs as lacking in authentic activities and experiences, and as needing more effective strategies to aid in comprehension and retention (Le Blanc, 1990). Following the release of the NCFS results, a number of new French programs were created, with attempts to improve over past programs by increasing their communicative component.

Programs such as *On y Va* and *Visages* incorporated more authentic language activities. These programs also made frequent use of diverse textual forms in textbooks and workbooks as well as pedagogical tools such as songs, games, gesture, drama, role-play, storytelling, video, the Internet, and computer software in order to provide students with a variety of ways to experience the language and make meaning from it. Upon studying these newer and "improved" programs it still seemed to me that they did not fully represent the balanced curriculum described by Stern. I found that programs such as *On y Va* and *Visages* tried to include all parts of the multidimensional curriculum, but the 4 syllabi tended to appear in isolation from one another rather than integrated together. Furthermore, despite their creative presentation, I found that much of the programs still consisted of exercises for learning grammar and vocabulary, usually with superficial communicative contexts. They were an improvement over past programs, because they did give students more tools to make meaning from, but they were still not enabling the majority of FSL students to achieve

notable degrees of language competence. Although most programs provided more opportunities for speaking, many of them still provided these opportunities in non-meaningful contexts, where students' main focus was on their grammatical accuracy.

Having been frustrated with these programs, I was intrigued when I came across Maxwell's (2004b) French program, the *Accelerative Integrated Method (AIM)*. I noticed that a remarkable amount of AIM integrated grammatical awareness with communicative activities, such as drama and storytelling. AIM notably included several of the tools recommended by language experts and used in other programs, such as movement, visuals, gesture, and music. I also noted that Maxwell claimed higher rates of success both in individual communication skills and overall than any other program. Furthermore, the program was apparently quickly gaining in popularity across Canada due to its success. It was then that I decided that AIM merited further study.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Named the *Accelerative Integrated Method* for its supposed ability to allow for the swift acquisition of basic communication skills, Maxwell's new approach to L2 teaching combines gesture with drama, music, dance, and storytelling, primarily through learning plays (Maxwell, 2001). High frequency vocabulary words are carefully selected and are taught through stories. Students listen to a story (told with gestures) and learn the story themselves. Next, the students act

out and tell the story for others. When students have mastered the vocabulary orally, they manipulate the language that they have learned in written form through various activities. Once students can read the plays, they can answer written questions about the plays. Last, students use their oral and written knowledge of the plays to create improvisational plays and creative writing pieces.

Instructional time is split up into activities, each of which takes approximately 10 minutes. Each French period will have 2, 3, or 4 activities, depending on the length of the class period. These activities change from day to day, depending on where students are in the unit and what their current needs are, and may be teacher or student-led. For example, the class may start with a gesture review session, progress into learning a dance for a play, and finish with oral story retelling in partners.

In the interest of catalyzing CF students' aural comprehension and increasing their retention of vocabulary, Maxwell (2001) devised a way of representing vocabulary visually, kinesthetically, and aurally through what she called the "Gesture Approach". This new method of language teaching relies largely on gestures that instructors make and students imitate. All of an instructor's communication with students is accompanied by these gestures, which are quite similar to American Sign Language. Students quickly learn what the gestures mean and associate them with their French lexical equivalent. Gestures are often used in a manner that depicts the number of syllables in the word. The word *'maintenant'*, for example, is gestured by tapping a fist in the

palm of the hand once for each syllable – *main-te-nant*. This allegedly enables students to internalize the structure of words more easily. Gestures are also designed to show grammatical elements. Distinctions between masculine and feminine articles, for example, are always shown by either a finger under the nose for a mustache, or a hand behind the head for a feminine pose. Students, then, must consciously make this distinction when they hear these articles, in an intent to develop grammatical awareness of gender. Students learn what each gesture means and associate the gesture with the French word that accompanies. Once this is learned the teacher stops speaking the words and the students are expected to say them using the teacher's gestural cues (Maxwell, 2004b). Students are also expected to use gestures when they speak to aid themselves and to provide cues for their fellow classmates. Maxwell (2004b) submits that gesture is an important tool for second language teachers; she suggests that almost all second language teachers use gesture in their class to facilitate learning. Indeed, gesture seems to be very effective as it is used in Maxwell's method.

Another innovation in Maxwell's program is her development and use *of* "Paired Down Language" (*PDL*). Rather than focusing on nouns and adjectives, as almost all other programs do, Maxwell researched the words most often used by French speakers in basic communication. She organized them in her program so that students learned the most crucial vocabulary first, even if some words were considered more difficult than other words and would traditionally be reserved for more advanced students in other programs. Words in PDL are

chosen to give students the broadest range of communication possible (i.e., synonyms are not taught for words until a considerable foundation has been laid). Accelerated basic fluency is the goal.

In addition to gesture, Maxwell's (2004b) *AIM* uses song as another mode that can aid students in learning vocabulary and internalizing language structures. Each unit in her program contains a song that is constructed of vocabulary and syntax patterns learned in the unit. Students sing the song and accompany the words with dance moves that depict the meaning of words, thereby internalizing the words and meanings in their minds (Maxwell, 2004b). Drama and storytelling are also described as highly effective tools in AIM. Maxwell (2004b) asserts that stories and plays provide a comprehensible context for samples of how the target language (TL) is used both in narrative discourse and dialogue. Extended exposure to and experience in using these forms allow students to internalize them and gain confidence in their own ability to communicate in the TL (Maxwell, 2004b).

Once students have become familiar orally with the play, they begin to read and write about the play. Written activities are scaffolded to provide enough support at each level to ensure a high level of student success. Beginning activities are sentences extracted from the play with one word missing. Students choose the appropriate word from a choice of 2 words given in brackets (i.e., *La policière* _____ *[conduit/casse] une auto.*) (Maxwell, 2004c, p. 14). Notice that the verb is presented to the student in the conjugated form, so that the student does not need to struggle with first conjugating the verb before

inserting it in the blank. Nouns are similarly given in brackets with their appropriate articles so that students do not tire of the exercise from first having to search for the correct gender.

After fill in the blank activities, students put sentences from the play presented in jumbled order back together using correct word order (i.e., *veut pied à Marie à aller Paris* becomes *Marie veut aller à Paris à pied*) (Maxwell, 2004c, p. 17). They also draw a picture of the sentence they made, which enables the teacher to see if they comprehend the sentence. Following sentence construction exercises, students answer questions about the play. These questions are called "questions totales" because the entire answer is in the question (i.e., *Est-ce que Pierre est l'ami ou le frère de Marie?* becomes *Pierre est l'ami de Marie*) (Maxwell, 2004c, p. 25). Next, students answer "questions partielles" wherein the question only provides part of the answer and the student must produce the rest of the required vocabulary (i.e., *Qu'est-ce que la policière dit quand elle voit Marie*? becomes *La policière dit "Bonjour Marie. Est-ce que je peux t'aider?"*) (Maxwell, 2004c, p. 33). Last, students write their own stories, which may be an extension of the story from that unit, or may be on a completely new topic.

Maxwell believes that feedback on student output is an indispensable part of developing language skills, though carrying out this task effectively requires a judicious and observant teacher. Maxwell describes in considerable detail the types of feedback that are suitable in various circumstances. First, Maxwell, highlights that it is important to correct mistakes *every* time they are made during

gesture review. This may be done by recasting the error and pointing out the difference between the correct and incorrect pronunciation if necessary. The entire class should repeat the word so that attention is not drawn to a particular student. Maxwell (2004b) explains that feedback for oral production is important because students use these models of language as building blocks for their own language development. When correcting individual students, Maxwell advises that oral correction should be based on their level of development, and what the teacher knows about their personality and individual needs. In the initial stages, correction should be minimal (1 or 2 corrections per interaction) until the student develops some confidence with the language (Maxwell, 2004b).

Feedback for written work should be appropriate to the exercises that students are doing. Maxwell's (2004b) philosophy is that errors should be relatively easy to correct so that students can learn from their mistakes without becoming frustrated. If the teacher feels students are able to find the correct answer themselves, the teacher may simply underline the error; if the teacher feels the student needs more direction, the teacher may circle the correct answer in the question or write it above the error.

To a certain extent the role and effectiveness of feedback depends on the vigilance of the teacher. While stopping students and asking them to repeat a mispronounced word or identify an error is not a difficult task, it requires a certain type of dedication to attend faithfully to these details. This kind of attentiveness is also required for students' written work. Maxwell (2004b) remarks that while teachers cannot possibly mark all written work, occasionally marking student

work so students can correct and learn from their errors is a valuable part of language learning. The key lies in ensuring that students *do* correct their work. Maxwell (2004b) feels that it is a waste of time for a teacher to mark student work if students are not expected to correct their mistakes.

After developing AIM (1999), Maxwell began a graduate program where she studied the effectiveness of her new method in comparison to the popular theme-based programs used in most CF classrooms such as *Visages* and *On y va*. Maxwell (2001) conducted case study research to make this comparison. She interviewed students from 2 cohorts: One cohort learned French taught through a theme-based program, the other learned French taught through AIM. Nine students were selected from each cohort – 3 whom the teacher labeled as high achievers, 3 average students, and 3 who were achieving below average in comparison with their peers.

Maxwell interviewed all 18 students using a particular protocol and specific questions that required increasingly sophisticated knowledge of French. She then analyzed their oral answers, and compared the two cohorts' results in terms of the students' abilities to speak, comprehend, and use grammar correctly. Maxwell (2001) found that the cohort using AIM attained levels of oral and written proficiency that far surpassed those of the cohort using the theme-based approach. For instance, the average number of correct responses to interview questions for the theme-based cohort was 13.5%, while the AIM group answered 96.7% of the questions correctly (Maxwell, 2001, p. 28). In another comparison, the average number of words for each response in the comparison group was

27.9 whereas the AIM students produced an average of 334 words (p. 29). Based on her own empirical research, Maxwell (2001) reports that students taught using AIM outperform students in a comparison group in all oral and aural samples. In an action research study, McIntyre (2007) investigated the development of students' oral proficiency using the AIM program. She too notes that students' ability to communicate solely in French in the FSL classroom increased noticeably after learning French through AIM compared to her previous teaching experience using a theme based program.

Limitations of the AIM method that Maxwell (2001) noted included grammatical errors, such as the incorrect conjugation of double verbs (e.g. *je veux viens*), lack of recognizing gender differences in nouns (e.g. *le maison*), and using inappropriate verb tenses (e.g. *tous les autres chiens a...*). While these errors are not trivial, they are not unlike errors made by small children learning their first language; hence, Maxwell (2001) anticipated that over time and through longer exposure to the language, students would also gradually notice these errors and self-correct. Whether this be the case or not, the presence of such errors raises the question of how the grammatical achievement of AIM students compares with that of students in other programs.

AIM has received much attention because of the high levels of student achievement that various educators who have adopted the approach have reported their students attaining in oral communication as a result of implementing AIM in their classrooms. While no consensus exists on any one method of second language instruction being the most effective for all students,

Maxwell's method seems to demonstrate a high potential for improving students' oral FSL fluency. What is not known, however, is: (a) What is the cost of using this method to students' overall French ability, (b) What are the weaknesses of the method? and (c) How does AIM impact on learners overall. In order for school boards and teachers to implement such an innovative method with more confidence and to promote more widespread use of this method, they must have a better understanding of how it will influence students' language development on various levels. Because earlier programs tended to emphasize grammar learning, and AIM does not feature formal grammatical instruction, educators fear that students may not develop sufficient grammatical understanding of French if they learn French through the AIM method. To answer their question and avoid the initial enthusiasm and later criticism that French immersion experienced, further research into the AIM method is necessary.

Clearly, the desire to include a grammatical element in elementary FSL instruction suggests a particular set of preconceptions about what is valuable and necessary in L2 learning. These notions will be addressed in my study. In addition, I investigate the development of students' understanding of French grammar by analyzing their written work. A better understanding of which grammatical features students do and do not learn through this method will better inform educators advocating for and against AIM by providing them with research evidence against which to weigh their claims.

CHAPTER 2 – BACKGROUND LITERATURE

I will begin by presenting the history of L2 teaching in Canada, specifically as it relates to the development of the CF program. Following, I will describe analytic and communicative approaches to L2 acquisition since they have strongly influenced L2 teaching in Canada. In brief, the analytic approach embodies a cognitive framework for L2 acquisition, and holds that L2s are learned through the acquisition of several skills, while the communicative approach, which embodies a socio-cultural framework, proposes that L2s are learned through natural exposure to and experience with the language rather than mastering exercises (Lyster, 2007). After presenting the historical and theoretical backgrounds of CF programs in Canada, I will discuss a number of teaching methodologies that have risen out of the above theories and been used in developing CF programs. As my study focuses on students' development of grammar usage, I will pay particular attention to their views regarding grammatical acquisition. Last, I will apply the above theories and methods to the *Accelerative Integrated Method* (AIM), a new method developed in Canada for teaching core French and French immersion. The discussion will focus on examining AIM in terms of its adequacy for developing grammatical accuracy in written work.

2.1 Background Information

In this section I begin by outlining the history of L2 teaching in Canada over the last 6 decades, in particular the theoretical orientation that programs have had and the shifts in view and practice that have occurred over the years. I describe in some detail Stern's multidimensional curriculum and its role in

shaping FSL programs across Canada. Last, I discuss the scope and findings of the NCFS and its influence on the wave of new curricula that followed.

2.1.1 L2 Teaching in Canada

Stern (1982) notes that, historically, CF programs across Canada favoured a grammar-oriented curriculum. He reviews how, before the 1950s, L2 classes consisted of grammar taught using textbook drills, reading passages, and grammar lessons. Then, Stern continues, the influence of behaviourist psychology in the mid 50s brought to prominence the audiolingual method that still favoured drill practice, but focused much more on speaking and listening than on textbook based grammar instruction. In the early 60s, the work of Chomsky in linguistics and of Krashen in L2 teaching popularized the idea of "nativism", the concept that humans had an innate aptitude and predisposition for language learning. As a result, methodologies that supported an implicit approach to L2 learning – seen as nativist - received attention, such as Asher's *Total Physical Response* (Asher, 1966). In the mid 60s, French immersion was introduced to Canadian schools as an experimental program.

A number of government documents ensued regarding French programs. Stern (1982) relates that, in 1973 the Ministry of Education of Ontario established a committee to write a report (the Gillin Report). The goal of the report was to improve and encourage the development of FSL programs (Stern, 1982). The Gillin report was released in 1974 and was well received in general. In 1973, an extensive study was begun in the Ottawa and Carlton school boards to compare student proficiency in French using CF, extended French, and Immersion programs (Morrison et al., 1979, 1986). The study continued into the late 1980s,

with annual reports describing results of particular studies conducted the previous year (Morrison et al., 1986). In their overview of FSL programs in Canada based on the findings of the first years of the Ottawa and Carlton School Board study, Stern, Swain, and McLean (1976) express concern over the prominent role played by rote imitation, which Stern observes had dominated L2 methodology despite growing doubt over its effectiveness. Stern et al. (1976) state

> [a]lthough this emphasis on habit formation has been subjected to increasing criticism since 1965, the audiolingual method which involves these techniques, has maintained itself and many teachers of French, particularly in the elementary schools, have adopted it. (p. 106)

In 1977, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced a new FSL program and encouraged schools to strengthen their French programs. The program overview stated that no simple method was considered as the "best method" for teaching French (Stern, Ullmann, Balchunas, Hannia, Schneiderman, & Argue, 1980). Soon after, the Ontario Ministry of Education (1980) published *French Core Programs 1980: Curricular Guidelines for the Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Divisions* as a framework for school boards to use when structuring their French programs. The document also made suggestions about activities to strengthen various language skills (Stern, 1982).

The 1970s saw a dramatic shift in L2 teaching. Analytic approaches gave way to experiential methods (Stern, 1982). The success of immersion programs led to support for the case for experiential L2 learning (i.e., implicit learning through exposure to and experience with the language). Extended French

programs, or programs that taught French as an L2 and also used French as the medium of instruction in one or more other subjects, were introduced in hopes of creating learning environments that were more like the successful French immersion program (Stern, 1992). By the late 70s however, it was becoming evident that students in CF were not learning as effectively as hoped, despite the praise that the new experiential approaches had received. Language experts continued to search for a program that would meet students' needs and allow them to attain high levels of fluency in all communicative skills. Stern's (1982) evaluation of CF programs in Canada revealed that they were not in large, highly effective.

He (Stern, 1982) reported that programs developed in the early 1980s still tended to emphasize oral and aural skills, and to place less emphasis on reading and writing skills as was characteristic of the audiolingual method. Upon reviewing the curricula, Stern, (1982) reported:

> The main objective is one of language proficiency in practical terms with some emphasis on linguistic knowledge.... grammatical concepts and terms are treated as subsidiary; they are regarded as more appropriate for intermediate and senior grades. Cultural knowledge, too, is not prominent and left implicit through songs and rhymes, occasional cooking recipes, units on the Quebec winter carnival and the like. (pp. 56-7)

In response to his findings, Stern (1983) developed a framework for L2 effective programs, named the multidimensional curriculum.

2.1.2 The Multidimensional Curriculum

The multidimensional curriculum model included 4 syllabi: the linguistic, communicative, cultural, and general language education syllabi (Stern, 1983). Stern explained that the four syllabi should all be included to varying degrees in different programs, depending on the goals of the teacher and students. However, in all, integration of the four components is essential (Baker & Jones, 1998). Since the multidimensional curriculum played a central role in shaping later curricula, a brief description of the elements entailed in each syllabus and how they may emerge in a language program is merited.

2.1.2.1 Linguistic.

The linguistic syllabus of the multidimensional curriculum designed by Stern (1992) includes attention to pronunciation, grammar, and functional analysis of the language. Stern advocates that correct pronunciation does hold some merit and should be included to some extent in L2 education. However, the extent to which pronunciation is taught depends on the goals of the language teacher and students; students wishing to attain communicative competence may aim to achieve comprehensible and acceptable pronunciation, while those wishing to teach the language would aim for more accurate pronunciation. In addition to speaking ability, students should gradually become able to recognize accent variations from different regions (Stern, 1992).

The second element in the linguistic syllabus is grammar. Students require some grammatical understanding of the language they are using (Baker & Jones, 1998). Stern (1992) suggests that grammar instruction has a place in the L2 classroom provided it is taught in a way that students can understand and

use. One method of teaching grammar involves presenting it to students in a meaningful context. Stern astutely points out that context embedded grammar has both the advantage of showing its usefulness and thereby motivating students to learn it, and the disadvantage of being so hidden that it is not noticed by students. Nevertheless, Stern (1992) submits that

> All grammar teaching pays attention to forms and structures whether the analysis is made explicit to the learner or is simply an underlying covert intention on the part of the teacher, expressed in the course design or the emphasis of the teacher's input. (p. 142)

Functional analysis, the third element of the linguistic syllabus, includes studies of speech acts, discourse rules, and semantics (Stern, 1992). In order to comprehend the linguistic structures and forms used in another language, the learner must be aware of how the context and participants of the communicative can influence the language used. Students should also study how words carry different meanings in various situations in the L2. In summary, the linguistic syllabus encompasses development in pronunciation skills, grammar understanding (taught in meaningful contexts), and understanding of linguistic structures in the L2.

2.1.2.2 Communicative.

The communicative syllabus emphasizes communication for meaning and purpose in natural contexts and is centred on the belief that "authentic" communication experiences are vital to acquiring communicative proficiency in another language. Attention is given to presenting the learner with frequent opportunities to communicate in a variety of situations for valid purposes (i.e.

meeting new people, telling others about oneself, asking for help, ordering a meal).

Stern (1992) points out that students are not always able to transfer communication skills from a classroom context into a practical context. For this reason, classroom activities should be as "authentic" as possible in order to enable this transition as much as possible. Interaction with native speakers is ideal, though not often possible (Baker & Jones, 1998). In reference to the importance of the communicative syllabus in language acquisition, Stern (1992) submits that analyzing grammatical elements of the language out of context before students have a certain degree of communicative competence is unhelpful since it may lead to the Humpty Dumpty effect - a student's ability to take the language apart, but not put it back together again. He asserts that it is preferable for students to acquire enough communicative ability with the language to be able to manipulate the parts of speech before they are asked to analyze grammatical elements of the language out of context.

2.1.2.3 Cultural.

Stern advocates (1992) that a cultural syllabus is also essential, since students need to learn the cultural protocols and content used in other cultural settings in addition to the target language in order to communicate effectively. Hamers and Blanc (2000) agree, explaining that effective communication in a particular culture requires knowledge of the behaviours and way of life that are characteristic of that culture. The cultural syllabus is guided by perceptions of what constitutes culture, the instructional goals of the teacher, and the instructional tools available to realize these goals. Stern (1992) explains that

cultural instruction is guided by the type and level of cultural knowledge that the instructor deems appropriate. This may include instruction on important historical events, artists, writers, and political figures, popular current artistic artifacts, such as songs and movies from the target culture, or more subtle cultural knowledge, such as social protocols and cues that one must be familiar with in order to act respectfully in various situations within that culture.

According to Stern (1992), most educators teach cultural elements with goals of "cross-cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication" (p. 212). Though these goals are perhaps the most practical and feasible in CF classrooms, it should be understood that cross-cultural understanding and communication can only be achieved on a relatively superficial level within the classroom, as true understanding and highly effective communication requires quite a deep understanding of the other culture and the nuances present in communication. There are a variety of methods through which cultural understanding may be attempted ranging from the presence of cultural artifacts in the classroom, to short discussions of cultural practices, to studies of cultural accomplishments such as renowned works of art or literature. Though the cultural syllabus is usually not emphasized, its influence on the student's understanding of the target language and culture should not be overlooked.

2.1.2.4 General Language.

Last, the multidimensional curriculum includes a component about the nature of languages and the process of language learning (Stern, 1992). In the general language component, students learn more about the nature of languages in general and how first and second languages are learned. Although there is no

clear suggestion of what constitutes the general language syllabus, Stern (1992) does note that it should be closely linked to the other three syllabi and should perform 3 tasks: enhancing the students' acquisition of the L2, equipping the student with the techniques, knowledge, and attitude required for learning a L2, and enabling students to make connections between the language being learned and other educational and social activities. The multidimensional curriculum also gave rise to the *Language Awareness* movement, which addresses a number of the elements deemed important in the general language syllabus. The language awareness movement, which began to receive attention in the early 1990s, is concerned with perceptions, knowledge, and use of language. As Svalberg (2007) reports, the American Language Awareness (ALA) society defined language awareness as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching, and language use" (p. 288). In other words, language awareness embodies insights and knowledge about language in a manner not unlike that outlined in Stern's general language curriculum. Like Stern, language awareness supporters believe that thinking about how languages are learned and used is helpful when learning a new language.

2.1.3 National CF Study

Stern's reports on the low success rates of CF programs and recommendation that they become more multidimensional inspired the NCFS. The NCFS was conducted from 1985-1990. It involved researchers and classrooms across Canada in a nationwide study of CF programs. Since the undertaking of the NCFS stemmed from Stern's observations that CF programs

were ineffective and needed to be more multidimensional, the study sought to investigate the nature of CF programs and to study their effectiveness, using the multidimensional curriculum as a measuring tool. Not surprisingly, the NCFS found that CF programs were, as Stern had said, producing achievement levels far below expectations.

The NCFS described former programs as language driven: "the focus is on the language itself, on the code system". That is, the study found an overemphasis on the grammar syllabus. The NCFS also reported that programs lacked authentic activities and experiences, and needed more effective strategies that aid in comprehension and retention (Le Blanc, 1990, p. 7). These observations hold true in programs such as *Horizons* (Kenney, 1975) and *Passeport français* (McConnell & Collins, 1985), which are grounded in drill exercises for practicing various grammar skills and do not contain many opportunities for authentic communication. An excerpt from Unit 3 of *Horizons* (see Appendix A) shows 10 exercises in total that drill students in adjective use, intonation, sentence structure, and pronunciation. The focus of these exercises is on form, not content. They present the language as a phenomenon to be puzzled out, not as an immediately relevant and useful tool for the student. Similarly, the role of linguistic competency is paramount in *Passeport français,* (see Appendix B), which contains ample exercises in verb conjugation, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation, but none that draw on the student's personal life.

As a complement to Stern's development of the multidimensional curriculum, Stern, Ullmann, Balchunas, Hannia, Schneiderman, and Argue

(1980) made suggestions for future curricula. In their report on "Module Making", Stern et al. (1980) describe various approaches to planning L2 teaching, including "topical", "situational", "notional", and "non syllabi", as well as teacher made programs. The topical and situational syllabi are similar. The *topic* or *situation* is the focus around which all necessary vocabulary, grammar, and expressions are gathered. The teacher decides which words and grammar structures the students will need to talk about a particular topic or in a particular situation. The *notional* syllabus provides language necessary for discussing notions. Popular notions include time, quantity, space, intentions, and attitudes (Stern, 1980). A *non* syllabus has no systematic ordering. Instead, one simply provides ample opportunity for communication.

Teacher made programs vary, as they can take any form and include whatever content a teacher views as valuable. In reviewing the number of possible methods for creating curricula, Stern (1980) observes that "a language curriculum should not throw out the ordered presentation of the language; rather, it should combine principles of sequential order with flexibility" (p. 6). In keeping with this assertion, he suggests "a future curriculum will be based on *guides* which will provide linguistic continuity and progression and *modules* which will provide the substance and content with greatest flexibility" (p. 6). This would enable teachers to adapt the curriculum to the needs and situation in their own classroom, and to maximize the effectiveness of the program.

In response to the NCFS results, new CF programs were created according to the criteria outlined in the multidimensional curriculum. New curricula were mostly theme-based, and were carefully leveled according to

experiences and topics that would appeal to students at certain ages (Tremblay, Duplantie, & Huot, 1990). Unit topics in the programs *Visages* and *On y Va*, for example, include art, music, winter holidays, summer camping, restaurants, and technology. Programs also increased their use of multimodal pedagogies in order to make their content more attractive and accessible to students.[1] *On y va* and *Visages* make extensive use of tools such as newspaper articles, comic strips, graphic organizers, listening activities, stories, role play, games, and songs (see Appendices C & D) (Anderson, Chemeris, Edgar, Masschaele, & Salvatori, 2001; Mas, 1997). Unlike many previous French textbooks, (e.g. *Vive le français,* [Campbell & Golinsky, 1983] & *Horizons* [McConnell & Collins, 1985]), almost every page of *On y va* and *Visages* textbooks is filled with colourful print, pictures, and attractive layout designs. Appendix E demonstrates the new multimodal format for presenting information. Grammar is presented in lists, charts, boxes, or small paragraphs. Workbook activities include: crosswords, word searches, fill in the blanks, list making, picture labeling, completing comic strips, and sentence writing (Anderson, Chemeris, Edgar, Masschaele, & Salvatori, 2001). These textbooks are representative of others currently on the market for use in CF classrooms. Grammar is still a large component of most new programs, viewed as necessary to develop competency

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[1] Multimodal pedagogies refer to teaching practices that include a variety of modes of learning and understanding. Modes can refer to any formats or tools that are used to convey meaning, such as books, drama, artworks, images, or objects (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005, p. 4).

in oral, aural, written, and reading communication skills; however, attempts are made to integrate grammatical exercises into naturalistic contexts and communicative activities rather than discrete, decontextualized grammatical drills.

Over the last 50 years, FSL instruction in Canada has undergone several evolutions: from a highly analytic approach, to one that is highly experiential, to one that seeks to provide both of these elements in a balanced program. The introduction of Stern's multidimensional curriculum in the 1980s marks the turning point when earnest efforts began at the administrative, research, and curriculum planning levels to create French programs that effectively combined analytic instruction with communicative experiences. Today, though there are theorists and language experts who hold that a highly analytic or communicative program is preferable to one that balances both sides of the continuum, many Canadian language experts have embraced a balanced approach as the optimal method for teaching CF (Lyster, 1990).

2.2 Theories

A review of the L2 research over the past 3 decades reveals an interplay between analytic and communicative approaches to L2 teaching. Two general theories have vied for favour during this period, namely the cognitive theory for L2 acquisition and the experiential model. These theories as well as their key supporters will be discussed below.

2.2.1 Cognitive Theory

Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) and McLaughlin (1987) support the cognitive perspective regarding L2 learning. Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) affirm that, "to a

great extent, learning a language is a cognitive task" (p. 126). McLaughlin (1987) has proposed an attention processing model, in which language learning is viewed as a set of skills that must be acquired. He explains that:

> To learn a L2 is to learn a *skill*, because various aspects of the task must be practiced and integrated into fluent performance. This requires the automatization of component sub-skills. Learning is a *cognitive* process, because it is thought to involve internal representations that regulate and guide performance. In the case of language acquisition, these representations are based on the language system and include procedures for selecting appropriate vocabulary, grammatical rules, and pragmatic conventions governing language use. (pp. 133-34)

According to the attention-processing model, these skills require varying degrees of attention at various stages of the learning process. Beginning learners perform "controlled" processes, processes that are capacity limited and temporary. As the language learner becomes more skilled, these processes gradually become "automatic" – the skills become permanently engrained so that the learner can perform them without thinking and can focus on other processes at the same time (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 139).

In addition to *controlled* and *automatic* processes, processes may be either "focal" or "peripheral." Often, a skill begins as a *focal* process and becomes *peripheral* as it becomes automatic, but users may also choose to focus on a task that is well within their ability and has become automatic (McLaughlin, 1987). A fluent speaker, for example, may pay extra attention

when greeting a person of particular importance. According to the cognitive perspective, L2s are learned by paying particular attention to linguistic elements and practicing applying these elements appropriately in language contexts.

2.2.2 Experiential Model

Not all language experts hold a cognitive view of L2 learning. Krashen's (1983) model is constructed around 5 hypotheses regarding L2 acquisition: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, monitor hypothesis, input hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, and affective filter hypothesis. In his acquisition-learning hypothesis, Krashen (1983) distinguishes between language "acquisition" – subconsciously developing an ability to use L to communicate, and language "learning" – consciously studying the grammatical rules that are part of a particular language. According to Krashen (1983), *acquiring* a language is much more useful than *learning* it, since learning a language does not ensure that a person will be able to use it to communicate. In addition, Krashen maintains that learning cannot be transferred into acquisition. In fact, Krashen holds that conscious learning can only be used by the Monitor, whose role is to evaluate and modify output. The Monitor, however, can only edit output *after* it has been generated by the language user, and is only useful in instances where the user has time to reflect on language form and grammar rules rather than meaning.

In his input hypothesis, Krashen (1983) explains that an L2 is acquired through "comprehensible input", or "aspects of language that the acquirer has not yet acquired but is developmentally "ready" to acquire ("*i + 1*")" (Krashen, 2007, p. 3). The learner continues to acquire the language by being presented with vocabulary and structures slightly above their current comprehension level, but

that are understandable with the aid of contextual or other non-linguistic clues. The natural order hypothesis holds that L2 learners acquire (but do not learn) certain grammatical structures before others and that this order is more or less the same for both first and second language learners.

Last, Krashen's (1983) affective filter hypothesis states that elements such as anxiety, motivation, and self confidence influence the learner's ability to acquire an L2. Lack of motivation, anxiety, and pressure build up a high "affective filter" which prevents the learner from acquiring the language. The learner may understand input, but with a high affective filter, the input will not be acquired.

2.2.3 Theoretical Debates

Some language experts critique Krashen's (1983) theory. Lyster (1990) argues that Krashen does not have empirical evidence to back up his acquisition-learning hypothesis. Indeed, evidence to support this theory has proved difficult to gather, particularly since it is very difficult to determine definitively whether something has been learned consciously or subconsciously, or whether learning can transfer to acquisition. Like Lyster, McLaughlin (1987) dislikes the acquisition-learning distinction because of the central role of conscious and subconscious learning, which McLaughlin feels is not truly definable and is perceived differently by various people.

Brown (2000) asserts that Krashen's choice not to formally teach grammar is not supported in literature, since research has shown the benefits of conscious rule learning and form focused learning. In response to these criticisms, Krashen and supporters of his theory have projected a number of rebuttals. For example,

Truscott (1999a, 2004, 2007), a supporter of non analytic teaching, reports that various language experts assert that grammar teaching brings positive results in L2 classrooms and is beneficial to students despite the fact that upon closer examination, their supporting evidence does not demonstrate these assertions. According to Truscott (2007), studies supporting grammar show improvements on grammar tests, but not on communicative ability, which are two different things. Truscott (2007) further finds that transfer of knowledge from test to communicative situation does not generally occur. Truscott's (2007) findings demonstrate that claims of evidence supporting grammar instruction are weak at best, and often completely unfounded. Krashen (1997, 1998) also presents arguments to support Truscott's (2007) claim.

To demonstrate that explicit grammar teaching is unnecessary, Krashen and Nikolov (1997) report results of a study they conducted to test whether teaching language through an experiential approach compromised grammar acquisition. Their study included an experimental group that was taught English for a year through an experiential approach, and a control group that was taught English using a traditional grammar-analysis method. The experiential group was pre-tested and post-tested, but the control group was only post-tested. Krashen and Nikolov (1997) report that the experiential group out-performed the control group in most areas. However, in my opinion, there are some flaws with his study.

First, since Krashen and Nikolov's (1997) control group was not pre-tested, it is impossible to know whether or not the two groups were on equal footing before the study began. Second, the experimental group, though taught

through an experiential approach, did receive grammar instruction when they asked for it or the teacher considered it helpful. Therefore, the approach was not completely free of grammar instruction. This is significant, as it may have contributed to the students' strong performances on the post-test of the study. Last, one of the researchers taught the experimental group for the study period, which may have influenced the validity of the results.

Contrary to what Truscott (1999, 2004) and Krashen and Nikolov (1997) assert, Swain (1985) states that correction, or negative input, is necessary in order to help learners refine their understanding of a new language. This theory builds on Swain's proposition of "comprehensible output", (i.e., output generated by the learner that is difficult to produce or requires modification before it is understood). Although Swain (1985) accepts the input hypothesis, she believes that it is not sufficient for second language acquisition (SLA). In addition to comprehensible input, she suggests that learners need to produce *comprehensible output* in order to develop their understanding of grammar. When getting one's meaning across is difficult and requires modification or effort it forces the speaker to pay attention to form and accuracy, thus improving their spoken language. Swain (1985) points out that people can learn to understand a language but not speak it because they do not pay attention to the syntax and grammar that speaking requires. Speaking, therefore, plays a role in improving grammatical understanding because one is forced to pay attention to it.

Recently, Swain (2006) has added to these hypotheses the need for "languaging". This act, Swain (2006) explains, refers to "the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (p. 98).

Swain maintains that musing aloud or in written form about a subject helps the learner to develop his/her thoughts further and to gain deeper understandings about it. The process of *languaging* can be applied to L2 learning as readily as to other subjects of study. By enabling students to "language" about language, "we can observe learners operating on linguistic data and coming to an understanding of previously less well understood material" (Swain, 2006, p. 98). In summary, Swain supports comprehensible input as proposed by Krashen, comprehensible output (students speaking the target language), negative feedback (corrections for student errors), and languaging (students thinking about aspects of the target language, and voicing their thoughts verbally or through writing) as valuable elements of L2 acquisition.

Krashen (1998, 2007) disagrees with Swain's (1985) proposition of comprehensible output, asserting that comprehensible input is sufficient for language learning and is a better option than comprehensible output. Ironically, considering the substantial number of experts who argue that Krashen's hypotheses are unfounded, Krashen (1998) criticizes Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis, stating that "data supporting a central hypothesis should be made of sterner stuff" (p. 178). Using various studies as evidence, Krashen (1998) demonstrates that comprehensible output occurs very rarely, causes anxiety, (which Krashen believes to seriously hinder L2 development), and has not been proven in research to actually help.

Another method of grammar instruction that has been contested in the last ten years is "recasting". *Recasting*, explains Lyster, (2007) is "repeating or reforming a student's statement without the error that they made" (93).

According to Lyster, (2007) recasts have been well received by many because of "claims that children frequently repeat parental recasts during first language acquisition" (p. 93). Lyster recognizes, however, that there are some complications involved in using recasts to enforce grammar. One problem that has arisen is the ambiguity of the message students receive from a recast. Truscott (1999) argues that recasts are not clear enough forms of feedback to be helpful. He maintains that the correction offered by recasts is so subtle that students do not even notice the changes that teachers make in their messages.

Lyster, Lightbrown, and Spada (1999) admit that recasts are sometimes ambiguous, and note that they are sometimes overlooked by students; however, they argue that some students do notice the difference and benefit from the feedback. Lyster (2007) mentions another problem that causes students to misunderstand the feedback received from a recast. He notes that recasts are often followed by praise from the teacher, such as "Oui, c'est ca....exactement" (p. 101). Because of the affirmations such as these after recasts, students are not always aware that their statements are grammatically incorrect. This problem is exacerbated when the content of the student's answer is correct, but the answer contains a grammatical error, or when the statement is grammatically correct, but is not the appropriate response. Ambiguity in which aspect of the student's response the teacher's statement is referring to occurs more in classrooms where grammar study is integrated in content based activities (i.e., in French Immersion classrooms). That is, classes in which grammar instruction occurs alongside content based activities provide more opportunity for a student's statements to be evaluated for both content and grammatical accuracy.

If a teacher does not specify which of these elements is being corrected or praised, students may misinterpret the teacher's message.

Contrary to views expressed by other second language researchers, Lyster (2007) asserts that practicing grammatical forms is a necessary prerequisite for their use in fluent production. He explains that the order and structure of phrases must be internalized through repeated encounters before they become accessible to the students in spontaneous communication.

2.2.4 Theories in Practice

Analytic and communicative approaches to L2 acquisition have resulted in two main methods for L2 teaching. As Lyster (1990) points out, L2 teaching has been troubled by a conflict between the 'formal' and 'communicative' approaches. The formal, or analytic approach, which focuses on language form, emphasizes learning the rules and structures of the target language (Lyster, 1990). These forms are learned through analytic procedures and drills, and their purpose is to "point to, identify, explain, compare, illustrate, and practice a language feature or an aspect of language use" rather than use it as a tool for authentic communication (Stern, 1992, p. 307). Stern further explains that an analytic approach to language learning can be beneficial since it tackles language in small portions, making it more manageable. On the other hand, the compartmentalizing of language has been criticized for contributing to the 'Humpty Dumpty effect' (Stern, 1992). The analytic approach has also been critiqued for practicing grammar skills that do not transfer into communicative practice.

The communicative or experiential approach focuses on meaningful communication using the target language. Stern (1992) explains that in the communicative approach, "language is acquired in the context of real communication without any formal instruction" (p. 303). Lyster (1990) supports this view, adding that emphasis is on fluency, not accuracy. Experiential classrooms: tend to focus on topics or subjects of communication rather than the language used, include purposeful activities (not simply activities that will demonstrate or practice a particular linguistic element), contain meaningful communication that fills in needed information, and demonstrate sustained speech among all participants, not only the teacher (Stern, 1992, p. 314).

Krashen (2007), who places focal importance on the role of comprehensible input in language learning suggests that surfing the internet can be an excellent method for students to gain comprehensible input on a topic that they find interesting, arguing that by allowing students to choose what they read about, their motivation and comprehension levels are heightened, since students tend to choose a topic that they like and already know something about. Krashen uses research from first language reading to support this hypothesis about SLA. On the other hand, Krashen (2007) does not offer any evidence that the learning process for reading in a first and L2 are the same, or even similar enough that the studies from first language reading can be applied to L2 students. For example, Krashen (2007) draws on Laufer's (1992) research on L1 reading development to support his own acquisition theory. According to Laufer, readers develop their reading vocabulary best when at least 95 percent of words in a text are already comprehensible to the reader. Krashen (2007) submits that

Laufer's claim supports his own theory for L2 vocabulary acquisition. However, it seems highly optimistic to believe that students in beginner and intermediate level French programs will be able to understand 95% of the vocabulary of the texts they choose, particularly since Krashen does not believe that texts should be preselected according to students' levels. In fact, he emphasizes that teachers do not need to structure their lessons with leveled texts, because classes full of comprehensible input will automatically have input for various levels. It is not clear how Krashen expects these reading conditions to materialize in L2 classrooms.

Krashen (1996) also advocates narrow listening (i.e. listening to conversation on a topic that a person finds interesting) as another method for gaining comprehensible input. This entails students listening to topics they are interested in and familiar with, including listening to the same text several times if they so desire. Krashen's (1996) recommended implementation of narrow listening follow his guidelines for narrow reading; that is, the listening activity should not be leveled and should discuss a topic highly interesting to the student.

Language experts fall in different areas along the analytic/experiential continuum. On the experiential end, Truscott (2007) believes that analytic instruction should not hold a place in the L2 curriculum, and Krashen (1983, 2007) believes that formal language instruction has very minimal uses and should not form a substantial amount of the L2 curriculum. On the analytic end, Stern (1992), Lyster (1990, 2007), and Swain (1985) believe that grammar instruction does have a role to play in L2 acquisition. However, they view that role differently than did their predecessors in the grammar translation era, who

prioritized translation exercises and memorizing vocabulary word lists (Brown, 2000).

As previously noted in section 2.2.2, Stern (1992), proposed an L2 curricular reform (the multidimensional curriculum), which included 4 syllabi. Therefore, rather than favouring one dimension of the analytic/experiential continuum over another, Stern (1992) recognized the need for both components and sought to combine both aspects of the language teaching continuum in a balanced curriculum, a view that has since been echoed by researchers such as Swain (1985) and Lyster (1990, 2007). Stern (1992) notes that experts generally agree that grammar correction holds some merit in a L2 classroom.

The trend in grammar instruction today is to provide focused language input while allowing students to make their own choices within the context of communicative tasks since the utility of grammar is seen as ultimately hinging on its role in facilitating communication (Lyster, 2007). However, there is also value in allowing students to test their perceptions of the language structures in non-threatening situations. For this reason, written grammar exercises and languaging can be useful. Lyster (1990) acknowledges grammar's place in L2 acquisition, but emphasizes that grammatical instruction must be embedded in communicative contexts. In Lyster's (1990) concluding comments concerning an analytic approach, he states,

> Analytic teaching may have an important role to play in learning French....however, it must also be made clear that its effects may be most beneficial to second language learning when integrated into a truly communicative context which continues to promote

> extensive language production through innovative techniques such as cooperative learning activities, process writing, and computer networking. (p. 171)

Though there are theorists who favour highly analytic or highly communicative approaches, many language experts have recognized that both approaches are valuable in the L2 classroom. The current trend leans toward a balanced approach that combines elements from both programs, as was proposed by Stern (1983) in his multidimensional curriculum, and is supported by Lyster (1990, 2007) and Swain (1985).

2.3 AIM

Interestingly, many of Stern (1992), Lyster (1990), Swain (1985), and Krashen's (1983, 1996, 2007) suggestions have been implemented in AIM. For instance, AIM was created in accordance with Stern's multidimensional curriculum, as is outlined next. The following is a description of how AIM embodies each of the syllabi that make up the multidimensional curriculum.

2.3.1 Reflection of the Linguistic Syllabus in AIM

As was described above, the linguistic syllabus includes learning pronunciation, grammar, and functional analysis. In AIM, students acquire pronunciation through regular exposure to key words and phrases. They learn to imitate their teacher's pronunciation by repeating words after her and, according to Maxwell's (2004b) guidelines for implementing the program, are corrected in choral activities when mispronunciations are heard. Grammar is also taught largely through exposure, although students do indirectly review spelling and

sentence structure when they write answers about the play in their workbooks. Some grammatical elements are taught through gestures, such as an *'r'* motion made at the end of a double verb combination or a gesture used to denote reflexive verbs. Sentence structure is reviewed through manipulation activities such as putting the words of the sentence in the correct order (Maxwell, 2004b). Questions in workbooks are carefully laid out to practice basic structures and provide forms that students can use in their own communication. For example, until some fluency is acquired, all questions are posed in the *Est-ce que* form. Discourse is also taught implicitly through the stories that students learn.

2.3.2 Reflection of the Communicative Syllabus in AIM

Maxwell's AIM provides maximal opportunities for authentic communication. The drama and storytelling components in her method require that authentic communication comprise a significant part of virtually every class. Students discuss characters and events in the story, express their own sentiments toward the story, and practice telling the story themselves. Communication is always authentic in that its primary purpose is communication, not a presentation of grammar elements in action. Furthermore, the communication component is highly motivational, which inspires students to participate in interactive activities.

Maxwell claims that students' abilities to communicate in French are enhanced because AIM incorporates several modes to facilitate comprehension. Lyster (2007) supports this notion by noting that language teachers often draw on tools and techniques to make input comprehensible to students. These may include slowed down speech, rephrasing, graphic organizers, film, computer,

overhead projection, body language, gesture, and facial expression. Met (1994) encourages the use of such clues, explaining that "body language, such as gestures or facial expressions, link language to meaning," which is a critical factor in learning in L2 classrooms (p. 168). Lyster (2007) describes a number of studies that look into researching the effectiveness of these various tools. In general, Lyster reports findings that support the assertion that multimodal tools are useful in aiding comprehension. The caveat is that these tools, which focus on enabling comprehension, must be complemented with form-focused activities that push the student to recall and use learned vocabulary and syntax without the support of these other tools. Lyster also submits:

> Typical content-based tasks requiring oral interaction tend to be cognitively demanding and context-embedded, and so need to be complemented by written tasks that are context-reduced in a way that pushes learners away from their reliance on paralinguistic support for task completion. (p. 86)

Tools lose their usefulness if they facilitate comprehension in the short term but hinder acquisition in the long term.

Maxwell (2004b) asserts that gesture, a key tool in AIM, enables students to hear, see, and show the meaning of words. McCafferty (2006) conducted a study in which gestures were used to portray articulation and rhythm in the target language. According to the results of McCafferty's study, this gesturing technique has been found to improve recall, processing, and comprehension of information. Maxwell (2004b) also views drama and storytelling as highly effective tools in the AIM. According to Maxwell, these activities contextualize

vocabulary and enable students to interact with French in a way that makes it personal and meaningful to them.

Richard-Amato (1996) also discusses the value of storytelling, drama, and role-play in a second language classroom. She argues that these multimodal pedagogies have particular value for L2 learners because these pedagogies lower anxiety levels and increase students' motivation to participate. In addition to drama and gesture, Maxwell (2004b) also uses games, songs, and dance to allow students to express the language in other forms. Ayotte (2004) submits that songs may be useful for learning vocabulary "because of their rhythmic, patterned and melodic elements that facilitate memorization" (p. 20). Ketcheson (2006) seconds this view, maintaining that vocabulary is more easily acquired when it is set to music or rhyme.

Richard-Amato (1996) also promotes the use of songs and musical chants, explaining that they allow for playful exploration of words and facilitate students' internalization of phrases and patterns without resorting to painful drill exercises. AIM certainly seems to provide ample opportunity for comprehension through its use of multimodal tools. However, the extent to which AIM reaches beyond basic comprehension to teach grammatical accuracy and provide for the refinement of linguistic skills, as Lyster (2007) describes, is not clear.

2.3.3 Reflection of the Cultural Syllabus in AIM

The cultural element of the multidimensional curriculum plays a much less prominent role in Maxwell's units. Because her units centre on stories, there is little direct cultural information other than that imparted somehow in the story. Most of her stories, however, do include some cultural elements. The story

Comment y aller, for example incorporates francophone speakers in Quebec and Paris, *Louis la grenouille* makes references to Louis XIV of France, and *Le bistro des animaux* presents francophone speakers in Louisiana and their Festival *Mardi gras* (Maxwell, 2004a, p. 48). In addition, games played in the unit add some cultural content. For example, the game accompanying the unit *L'arbre Ungali* is a card game of famous Canadian and French sites or artifacts such as the Eiffel Tower, the Seine, a museum, the St. Lawrence River, and the Château Frontenac (Maxwell, 2004b, p. 15).

2.3.4 Reflection of the General Language Syllabus in AIM

The effectiveness of AIM in including the general language syllabus may best be evaluated by reviewing the criteria outlined by Stern (1983) for this syllabus, namely to enhance students' L2 acquisition, equip them with the techniques, knowledge, and attitudes required to learn an L2, and enable them to make connections between the language they are learning and their other educational and social activities. Since various researchers name multimodal tools such as gesture, visual aids, music and drama, as enhancements to a L2 program, it seems fair to suppose that AIM meets the requirements of this syllabus. These tools also presumably can provide students with techniques for recalling vocabulary and sentence structures, though this would not be known definitively without research.

2.3.5 AIM Compared to other FSL Programs

Fortunately, Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin, (2007) have conducted a study comparing grade 8 students from several CF classes using AIM with grade 8 students from CF classes not using AIM in the Bluewater District School Board.

Mady et al., (2007) investigated a) teaching practice in CF classrooms, particularly regarding the use of AIM, b) students' proficiency in French using the AIM program compared to students' proficiency not using the AIM program, c) students' perceptions about their FSL experiences, and d) teachers' perceptions from AIM and non-AIM classes. Mady et al., (2007) used the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) checklist (for a further explanation of COLT see section 3.3.1) to investigate question a), a series of tests designed to measure speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiency to answer question b), a questionnaire and interviews to study question c), and a survey to investigate question d).

Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin (2007) studied CF classes in 16 schools. They found that activities in AIM and non-AIM classes varied between teacher led, student led, choral, and group activities, although the percentage of teacher led activities non-AIM classes ranged from 39 to 100% whereas teacher led activities in AIM classes ranged from 9 to 69% (p. 23). Content in AIM and non-AIM classes focused mainly on language form. In both AIM and non-AIM classes, teachers largely controlled the content of the class. Student modality ranged considerably. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing were noted as well as instances where they were used simultaneously (i.e., speaking and listening). All but one AIM class used all 4 modalities, while only two of the non-AIM classes used all 4 modalities. Last, materials used in AIM and non-AIM classes provided mainly minimal exposure to language (single sentences or phrases) and were designed for non-native speakers.

The results of the proficiency tests revealed that students in AIM and non-AIM classes were performing relatively similarly in all 4 communication skills. Further gender comparisons of both groups revealed that both boys and girls in AIM schools were outperforming non-AIM boys and girls respectively on reading tests. A comparison of student scores from each school revealed that 1 particular AIM and non-AIM school ranked highest for most of the tests.

Questionnaire results showed that students from AIM and non-AIM classes did not show significantly different levels of motivation (Mady, Arnott, & Lapkin, 2007). Student interviews showed that, on the whole students in both groups were pleased with the program they were using, were satisfied with their progress, and the amount of French they and their teachers spoke in the classroom. When asked how much French they and their teachers spoke however, answers differed. Half of AIM students responded that they spoke French in class, compared to only one quarter of non-AIM students (Mady et. al., 2007). In addition, almost all AIM students replied that their teacher spoke French "all" or "almost all" of the time, while only 10% of non-AIM students gave a similar affirmative response (Mady et. al., 2007, p. 40). Non-AIM students, in fact, seemed pleased with their teacher's practice of using English alongside French in the classroom because they felt it was necessary for comprehension.

Teachers provided their views concerning their practice and their FSL program through a written survey. It is interesting to note that when asked whether or not they had been to an AIM workshop or conference, 5 of the 6 AIM teachers and 5 of the 6 non-AIM teachers responded affirmatively (Mady, Arnott & Lapkin, 2007). Eleven out of 12 teachers reported that they used AIM

materials in their practice, the exception being one non-AIM teacher. These materials were mainly *Histoires en Action* packages (the AIM program package) among the AIM teachers and *Fun French Plays* (the precursor to *Histoires en Action*) among non-AIM teachers (Mady et. al., 2007). In addition, all AIM teachers stated that they use non-verbal cues, and specifically gestures from AIM in their teaching. Five of the non-AIM teachers also answered positively when asked whether they use non-verbal cues, two of them stating that they used AIM gestures. Of particular interest are the comments made by non-AIM teachers regarding the French proficiency of students from AIM programs. Two non-AIM teachers specifically commented that students from AIM programs seemed more orally fluent. One teacher also commented on written fluency:

> I have found that students who have had AIM converse more willingly and fluently in class and their grammar and sentence construction far outreaches the majority of non-AIM students who I've had over the past thirteen years. (Mady et. al., 2007, p. 54)

AIM teachers also commented on their students success, two of them making specific reference to the ability of students on an Individual Education Plan to participate successfully in the program. When asked how they would like to see FSL programs improved, non-AIM teachers listed items such as requiring their own classroom, and needing more professional development, while AIM teachers commented on needing more variety in AIM packages to provide students with more authentic written and aural French exposure (Mady et. al., 2007).

In the discussion of their findings, Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin (2007) note the lack of trends between the practices observed in AIM and non-AIM schools

and their success on the skills tests. Mady et al., (2007) conclude that the teacher plays a critical role in determining the success of their program. When speculating on the similarity of results among AIM and non-AIM classes, Mady et. al., (2007) mention that this similarity may be partially due to the use of AIM materials in both AIM and non-AIM classes, although non-AIM classes used only selective portions of the program, which Maxwell (2004b) warns is not desirable. Mady et. al., (2007) also note that although non-AIM students express confidence in their French program, they seem to relate this confidence with the knowledge that the use of English is an acceptable and available tool in French class, particularly for comprehension. AIM students, by contrast, seem to take pride in knowing that they can participate successfully in class using exclusively French.

It is possible that AIM's engaging nature and its record of enabling success for learners of all types develop positive attitudes among students (and parents) toward French; it may also strengthen the perception that language learning is an achievable goal. Various instructors who have used AIM to teach French have reported high levels of success and enjoyment, among their students (Courchesne, 2005, Cox, 2004, Gordon, 2004, Kirwin, 2006). Lastly, AIM fulfills the general syllabus requirement of equipping students to connect their L2 to other contexts in their lives to the extent that it enables students to tell stories of their own experiences.

2.4 Conclusion

AIM does, to some extent, include each of the syllabi outlined by Stern in the Multidimensional Curriculum. As Stern predicted, the prominence of each

syllabus in the program reflects the goals of the program creator (i.e., it reflects Maxwell's goals for CF students). Because fluency is Maxwell's (2004a) primary goal, communicative activities and grammar hold dominant positions in the program (p. 11). Nevertheless, some cultural content and general language is included. The 4 syllabi are well integrated so that they are often addressed simultaneously in a lesson.

Maxwell's (2001) AIM integrates Stern's (1983) language and communicative syllabi. However, daily activities in AIM not only include communicative interaction; they also include detailed attention to grammar. In addition, Maxwell (2001) integrates the two syllabi in thoroughly communicative and meaningful interactions as Lyster (1990) suggests. For example, students regularly engage in extensive communicative activities. However, language input is structured so that grammatical elements are made explicit to students. Article agreement, for example is always demonstrated through gestures as well as sounds. Every time the article *un* is spoken, one finger is raised to show the meaning of '*un*' and the masculine gender is shown by putting a finger of the other hand under the nose like a mustache. Whenever the article *une* is spoken, a finger is raised to show the meaning, and the other hand is placed behind the head to demonstrate the female gender. Students thus see the difference between the two, as well as hearing the difference in the two sounds. These same masculine and feminine gestures are used to differentiate between other words such as *le/la, mon/ma, il* and *elle*. Maxwell (2004b) stresses the importance of correcting students when they do not incorporate these details in their own language production; feedback helps students to improve more quickly.

This echoes Swain's (1985) views of comprehensible output and negative input and is also in line with Lyster's (1990, 2007) past and present work. At the same time, Maxwell acknowledges that language acquisition is a progression, and that fluency takes time to develop. In this, she echoes Krashen's (1983) view that some errors will self-correct over time, just as young children learning their first language gradually self-correct over time (Maxwell, 2001).

Krashen's (1996) description of using narrow listening material to aid L2 acquisition is also reflected in the AIM methodology. As Krashen recommends, students hear stories several times in AIM. Though stories may initially be unfamiliar, aids such as gestures and pictures quickly help the students understand the stories' meanings. Next, the students read the story for themselves several times – with the previous tellings helping them to make sense of text. Although AIM integrates grammar instruction with other activities, it does not clearly match up with the methodology Krashen describes as learning, or skill building. In his article advocating free Internet surfing as an aid to L2 acquisition, Krashen (2007) differentiates between acquisition (here named the Comprehension Hypothesis) and learning (here named the Skill Building Hypothesis). According to Krashen (2007),

> A profound difference between the Comprehension Hypothesis and the Skill-Building Hypothesis is that in the former, aspects of language such as vocabulary and grammar are the result of acquisition, of receiving comprehensible input. For skill-building, mastery of these aspects needs to precede language acquisition: we first "learn grammar and vocabulary, then (someday) we can

> actually use them in comprehension and production. In this sense, the skill-building hypothesis is a delayed gratification hypothesis. (pp. 3-4)

In other words, in the acquisition hypothesis, elements of language are learned *while* they are used in situations, whereas the learning hypothesis requires that students learn vocabulary, grammar, etc *before* the latter can be used in a meaningful way.

If this distinction is used as a measuring tool, AIM clearly does not qualify as a skill building approach even though grammatical elements are regularly taught and reinforced through gestures and workbook exercises. Rather than studying basic skills in a decontextualized fashion, beginner AIM students are immediately immersed in meaningful interaction. AIM teaches grammar and vocabulary through comprehensible input and output. In short, in AIM, Maxwell has succeeded in incorporating explicit grammar instruction while maintaining the optimal circumstances described by Krashen (1983, 2007) for SLA.

AIM is representative of a culmination of past theories and research and promises to improve SLA in core French. As recommended by Stern (1983) and Lyster (1990), AIM integrates analytic material with communicative contexts and practices. Lyster (1990) recommends that instead of structured drills such as those typical of the earlier audiolingual approach, "[l]anguage practice should be characterized instead by activities which focus on the perception of language functions and their forms in various contexts, subsequently used in written and oral production activities including student interaction and role-plays" (p. 171). In other words, Lyster believes that students' attention should be explicitly drawn to

language forms, but these forms should be embedded in contexts that students find meaningful and personally relevant. The activities in AIM focus on language functions (communication) and their forms in various contexts such as oral speaking, plays, songs, and stories. These functions are subsequently used in written and oral production activities – students' workbooks, personal stories, and student plays. Based on my above review of the literature, Maxwell's AIM holds the potential to successfully incorporate many language researchers' ideas in a carefully designed combination. This begs the question: "How well do the proposed theories and methods as they have been embodied in AIM actually succeed in enabling CF students to become fluent in French?" The study described in the following chapters attempt to confront this question.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rationale

The research method used should be appropriate for answering the research question. My research question investigates the effectiveness of AIM for teaching written French grammar in a CF classroom setting. To effectively answer this question, I needed not only to analyze the grammatical accuracy of the students' written work, but also take into account contextual factors, such as the students, teacher, and tools available in the classroom environment, since these factors could have influenced the students' learning and in turn, affected my findings. Therefore, I needed a research approach that could encapsulate the contextual elements of my particular study. For this reason, I chose to conduct a qualitative case study in a classroom setting.

3.1.1 Case Study Research

An instrumental case study, as described by Stake (in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison et al, 2005) examines "a particular case in order to gain insight into an issue or a theory" (p. 183). Such a study is instrumental in that it serves to further the researcher's understanding of that particular issue. An instrumental case study accurately describes my own objectives, as I am seeking to better understand the effectiveness of AIM for teaching French grammar in CF settings.

A case study seemed an ideal research method for me because it would allow me to study grammar acquisition within the social context of the classroom. I did not merely tally the instances of correct grammar usage versus incorrect grammar usage, but considered the contexts in which students used correct

grammar or made errors and drew on my knowledge of the classroom environment when speculating on the reasons for these occurrences. This method of data interpretation reflects Dyson and Genishi's (2005) suggestion that "discrete bits of data about individuals, behaviours, and contexts will become the discursive substance of analytic narratives about a studied phenomenon" (p. 84). Furthermore, a case study allowed me to conduct in-depth analysis of a small group of participants. In depth analysis proved to be a valuable asset because, in addition to noticing trends, I was able to notice and consider the meaning of less frequent grammatical occurrences. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2005) acknowledge this advantage to case study research: "Case studies, in not having to seek frequencies of occurrences, can replace quantity with quality and intensity, separating the *significant few* from the *insignificant many* instances of behaviour" (p. 185). Many of the students' most interesting grammatical applications occurred only once or twice, but represented an understanding of grammatical features or the influence of environmental or methodological factors that are important in my study.

I did not conduct a comparative study like Maxwell's (2001); instead, I focused on students experiencing AIM in a CF classroom. My case study consisted of 3 sessions of classroom observation followed by intensive study of homework pieces of 3 students. I conducted field observation using a checklist in order to note environmental facets that may influence the findings of my analysis. The classroom observation is necessary to understand the environment that students learn in and the tools that are available to them.

Because case studies investigate a phenomenon within a specific context, case study findings are not generalizable to a larger population unless the factors characterizing the circumstances and environment of the case study are present elsewhere (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). Cohen et. al., (2005) describe circumstances in which case study research may be generalizable:

> from the single instance to the class of instances that it represents (for example a single-sex selective school might act as a case study to catch significant features of other single-sex selective schools);
>
> from features of the single case to a multiplicity of classes with the same features;
>
> from the single features of part of a case to the whole of that case. (pp. 182-183)

In other words, case studies are generalizable to instances where the same defining characteristics are present. Regardless of its generalizability, a case study is a valuable endeavor for illuminating the phenomena present in one particular situation. Furthermore, though individual case studies are limited in their generalizability, similar findings from numerous case studies on a particular topic increase the likelihood of generalizability to a broader population.

3.2 Recruitment

3.2.1 Classroom Selection

Finding a suitable research site proved more difficult than I had anticipated. Following my planned recruiting method, I contacted the research department of the Hamilton-Wentworth Public School Board and inquired about

the possibility of conducting my research within their board. They instructed me to follow the protocol for gaining research access – submitting a research proposal and a number of other documents describing the study and methods that I plan on using. After a review, my study was approved, but no classroom was found that met the criteria of my study and was willing to participate. I looked into applying for research into other boards, but I sensed that I would likely meet with similar results. I then decided to contact an acquaintance whom I knew has been using AIM to teach French for a number of years. Upon hearing about my intended study, she and her principal were pleased to welcome me to their school.

I will give a brief profile of the classroom used in my study. The class was in grade 7 and contained 34 students. All of the students whose work I analyzed were at least in their 3rd year of the AIM program. I observed the classroom between February and April, and conducted grammar analysis after observation had taken place. The French teacher had 9 years experience teaching CF, 3 of these using the AIM program.

3.2.2 *Student Selection*

A letter describing my study and a permission form were sent to the parents of the French class I intended to use in my study. The permission form gives parents the opportunity to allow their child to participate in the observation portion of the study but not in the homework portion if they do not mind their child being observed but would not like to present their child's homework for analysis. The letter includes assurances that if a student chooses not to participate, their grades will not be impacted in any way. The letter also indicates that students

who choose to participate would remain anonymous as far as possible in any dissemination of the results of my study. Only students who agreed to participate in the study were included in the study and the discussion of its results. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, (2005) describe this type of sampling as non-probability sampling, a strategy of sampling that "target[s] a particular group in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population, it simply represents itself" (p. 102). Cohen et al. (2005) report that

> small scale research often uses non-probability samples because, despite the disadvantages that arise from their non-representativeness, they are far less complicated to set up, are considerably less expensive, and can prove perfectly adequate where researchers do not intend to generalize their findings beyond the sample in question (p. 102).

My specific method of non-probability sampling is purposive, since their teacher handpicked the students for my study based on my own specific criteria, such as their French instruction background and their French skill level relative to their peers (Cohen et al, 2005, p. 103).

Upon receiving the signed permission forms, I was able to begin observation and data collection. Everyone agreed to participate in the observation, and all but 3 students agreed to allow their homework to be considered for the grammar analysis.

3.3 Materials

3.3.1 Communicative Orientation Language Teaching (COLT) checklist

I used the Communicative Orientation Language Teaching (COLT) checklist (see Appendix F) as the basis of my observations. This checklist's purpose is to measure "features of communication typical of classroom discourse, as well as...measure how closely these interaction patterns resemble the way language is used in non-instructional settings (Harley, Allen, Cummins, & Swain, 1990, p. 59)." COLT provides a useful overview of communicative elements occurring in the classroom and is made up of two parts: Part A, which the observer completes in "real time" and describes the classroom instruction, and Part B, which is filled in afterwards using an audio recording of the class session and identifies exactly how much time is spent on each of these elements. I only used Part A of the checklist as it provides sufficient insight into the classroom learning environment for the purposes of my study. The categories and subcategories in Part A of the COLT checklist are described below.

Part A contains 5 main categories: activity, participant organization, content, student modality, and materials. Each of these is subdivided into categories of possibilities that could occur in the classroom.

In the activities column, the observer writes the types of activities that they see and the time in minutes spent on each activity. The observer's task is to check off all subcategories that occur at some point in the class period. Therefore, it is possible for several subcategories to be checked in one main category. Under participant organization, for example, an observer may note

teacher to student/class, student to student, and choral interaction. When this happens, the most frequent occurrence is circled

The Participant Organization heading allows me to identify how activities are organized. Whole class activities may be directed teacher to students, students to students, or in a choral activity (led by the textbook or teacher). For goup work the observer checks off whether groups will be working on the same task or on different tasks. Sometimes students will be assigned individual seatwork, or some will be involved in individual seat work while others are working in groups.

The Content Heading describes the subject matter of the activities. Five subheadings identify different types of content information: language, narrow topics, limited topics, broad topics, and topic control.

Language refers to implicit and explicit focus on language. Implicit focus includes directions in class and disciplinary statements. The other 4 headings: form function, discourse, and sociolinguistics refer to explicit studies of language. Form refers to grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation; function refers to acts such as requesting, explaining, apologizing; discourse refers to how sentences combine cohesively in discussion; sociolinguistics refers to the features that call for particular forms in social contexts.

Topics are also examined according to how broad or narrow they are. Narrow activity content refers to language that is limited to the classroom environment, or that is routine (such as questions like "How are you?" discussing the weather, day of the week etc). It also includes anecdotes about or personal questions to students. Content with a limited range of reference includes topics

that reach outside the classroom but are still limited. These include talk about movies, students' activities outside of class, school or community events, and students' families. Broad topics reach between the immediate and surrounding environment. This includes public issues, world events, abstract ideas, and other subject matter, such as math or history.

Under topic control I the observer notes who chooses the topic. This may be the teacher, students, or both.

Student modality identifies what skills students are required to use in each activity. This may be speaking, listening, or other (which is not listed in the chart but is discussed in the article explaining the checklist and includes skills not listed like drawing, modeling, or acting).

Materials are described in terms of their type and use. Materials could be text, audio, or visual. Text is noted as being minimal (such as captions, word lists or isolated sentences) or extended (which includes dialogues, paragraphs or stories). Audio materials refer to sound recordings (CD recording) and visual materials include anything that visually contributes to the students learning in that lesson (poster, pictures, puppets). The checklist also notes materials that are designed specifically for pedagogical purposes, materials not intended for pedagogic purposes (everyday object with typically non-classroom uses), or semi-pedagogic materials – real life objects or texts that have been modified to use in class.

Materials may be used to control to various degrees what takes place in the activity. Highly controlled materials are those that do not allow extension beyond their use. Semi-controlled materials allow for occasional extension

beyond the restrictions imposed by the materials. Minimally controlled materials act as a starting point from which the activity or conversation may move over a wide range of topics.

3.3.2 Homework Pieces

I chose my grammar artifacts from homework that I had seen students working on in class (although not all students finished in class). The classroom teacher selected 3 students, one who she deemed a high achiever, one average achiever, and one who normally achieves below average in the class. I chose this method of selection (in place of random selection) in order to gain a more balanced representation of student work. I did not feel that a random selection could be relied on to produce a range of student work since the sample size is so small.

The classroom teacher selected 3 students of varying levels of performance. I asked the classroom teacher to provide me with samples of student participants' written homework for my grammar analysis.

As stated above, I analyzed the written work produced by a selection of 3 students. AIM units include written work in which the level of difficulty increases as students progress through the unit. I studied writing samples produced by students towards the end of a unit. These samples included: a) an exercise of answers to questions asked about the play written in complete sentences and b) a creative writing piece (e.g. a fictional short story). These two writing samples were appropriate artifacts to examine because they showed what students are capable of producing given two levels of structure. That is, students had the opportunity to show their ability to manipulate French in a closed

question/answer format and in a more open format (e.g. creating a novel piece of writing). The teacher gave me copies of the rough draft of their stories as well, which I referred to periodically when investigating a few of their grammatical errors.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Use of COLT checklist

The COLT checklist provided me with an understanding of the context in which the students learned French and produced work. For example, I was able to observe how much teacher support students received while doing written work. I observed what resources students used to complete their work (e.g., the teacher, other students, a textbook, dictionary, etc) and the learning environment in which they did their written work. It also gave me an opportunity to note unexpected factors that may have influenced student performance. I referred to my insights gained from observation to explain odd errors or inconsistent successes in the students' writing. The researcher was a non-participant observer, except on a few instances when I answered students' questions about their homework.

I observed the classroom participating in my study using Part A of COLT. I visited the class on 3 different occasions over a 2 month period. I observed on days that students were working on the homework pieces that I would be studying. For each class I sat in an inconspicuous corner and filled in the checklist as the class progressed. In the classes where extensive time for individual work was given, I circulated in the classroom observing student work

and assisting the teacher in answering questions that students posed about their homework.

After the completion of my data collection and analysis, I summarized the checklists completed on the 3 observation days.

3.4.2 Analysis of Written work

In order to find out whether students were meeting provincial expectations, I evaluated students' grammar use according to the criteria of student achievement outlined in the *Ontario Curriculum: French as a second Language: CF* (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 2001) for CF for grades 4 to 7.

All criteria for grammar knowledge and skills described in the *Ontario Curriculum: French as a second Language: CF* for the grades 4-7 were formed into code names. Where applicable, the grade at which the student is expected to learn the skill is placed at the end of the code name. For example, the expectation that students learn to conjugate *avoir* in the present tense for singular subjects by the end of grade 4 became *Avoir present tense singular 4.* Expectations that are not given a grade level do not have a number at the end of the code. In addition to the codes created from the *Ontario Curriculum: French as a second Language: CF*, (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 2001) additional codes were created as they were needed to code grammatical uses that do not come up in the expectations, such as using *contractions preceding vowels*, and *syntax*. Every curriculum expectation had a code for correct use and incorrect use.

The students' work was coded word for word using the Atlas software program and the codes described above. This is done by highlighting the

relevant part of the document and connecting it to the appropriate code. As language is a very complex phenomenon, the task of coding became quite challenging as instances invariably arose where more than one code was appropriate. For example, when a student used *retombees*, I had to decide whether or not to code the mistake as a missing accent, a spelling mistake, or as an inappropriate word, since 'retombees' did not make as much sense in the sentence as 'retombe'. In some cases more than one code was used. For example, the verb *donner* used for first person was spelled *done*. In this case it was coded as conjugated correctly, since the ending was correct, but was coded as misspelled, since the middle was misspelled.

After all student work was coded, the *Atlas* software was used to organize the findings in charts to make them more accessible. Once data has been coded, Atlas can procure all instances where a code occurs in one or more documents in list form. The software also keeps track of how often every code is used.

When the data artifacts were completely coded, the results were studied. By studying the numbers that each code occurred in each piece, I got an impression of how many times students did *x* or *y* correctly or incorrectly. I then referred to lists of codes from Atlas to examine these occurrences more closely. For example, I observed whether an error in *er* verb conjugation was the same verb incorrectly conjugated over and over, or if the student was conjugating several *er* verbs incorrectly.

Although the students' homework assignment was also coded fully, no data were presented concerning these homework pieces because I found that

they did not represent the students' grammatical capabilities to the same accuracy. The homework assignment involved answering questions using the question in the response. Since much of the answer can be copied, most of the grammatical elements reflect the students' abilities to copy accurately from the question more than their own understanding of French grammar. It seemed that for the purposes of my study, the validity of the homework pieces were second to the stories, which were generated entirely by the student.

Last, Maxwell's (2001) study revealed that AIM students showed weaknesses in double verb usage, verb conjugation, adjectival agreement, possessive determiners, and contractions with vowels. These grammatical features were also addressed in my analysis.

Chapter 4 – Findings

In this chapter, I present the following findings: (a) individual student strengths and weaknesses in their written stories, (b) a cumulative view of their strengths and weaknesses, (c) emergent trends, and (d) and how these findings relate to Maxwell's (2001) findings.

4.1 Individual Students' Grammatical Skills

4.1.1 Analysis of Carol's Written Language Skills

Below is a chart summarizing the results of my analysis of the 'below average' student's writing. We will refer to this 'below average' student as Carol. The chart displays the number of each grammatical occurrence in her story. Codes relating to the same grammatical phenomena are grouped together.

Table 4.1.1: Summary of Coding Results for Carol

Code name	Correct	Incorrect
Nouns plural formation (Gr. 4)	5	5
Definite article agreement (Gr. 4)	3	27
Indefinite article agreement (Gr. 4)	1	1
Partitive article agreement with nouns (Gr. 6)		1
Subject pronouns (Gr. 4)	7	
Adjectival agreement with nouns (Gr. 5)		2
Irregular adjectives (Gr. 7)	1	
Possessive determiners (Gr. 6)	1	
Demonstrative determiners (Gr. 7)	1	1
Adverbs (Gr. 6)	2	1
Expressions of quantity (Gr. 6)		1
Present tense of *être* (Gr. 4-5)	4	
Present tense of *er* verbs (singular) (Gr. 4)	8	
Present tense of *er* verbs (plural) (Gr. 5)		1
Present tense of *aller* (singular and plural) (Gr. 6)	2	
Present tense of *faire* (singular) (Gr. 6)	1	
Present tense of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs (Gr. 6)	2	2
Modal verbs *vouloir, pouvoir, devoir* (Gr. 7)	1	1
Double verb constructions (Gr. 7)		2
Verb agreement with compound subjects (Gr. 7)		2
Possessive preposition *de* (Gr. 4)	3	
Question Words (Gr. 5)		2
Conjunctions (Gr. 6)	2	3
Negation (Gr. 5)	1	
Expressions with *avoir* (Gr. 5)	1	1
Spelling		7
Grammatical spelling: accents	17	9
Grammatical spelling: contractions preceding vowels	3	1
Grammatical spelling: contractions with prepositions (Gr. 7)		2
Word order	6	9
Inappropriate words		15
Missing Words		5

4.1.1.1 Carol's Strengths.

Carol seems surprisingly strong in verb conjugations. Regular "*er*" verbs are conjugated correctly (shown in Table 4.1.1.1a) 8 times in her story (for example, *chien saute, chien parle, chien realize*).

Table 4.1.1.1a: Carol's correct conjugation of er verbs

1.	lapin	done
2.	chien	s'habille
3.	chien	saute
4.	chien	parle
5.	chien	pense
6.	chien	rèalize
7.	chien	rèalize
8.	chein	aide

Carol incorrectly conjugates "*aimer*" and "*livrer*", as shown in Table 4.1.1.1b.

Table 4.1.1.1b : Carol's incorrect conjugation of er verbs

	Verb as used in story	Correct form
1.	réalize qui la garcon et filles **aime...**	aiment
2.	la chein aide la pâques lapin **livre** la bonbon à...	livrer

Aimer is incorrect because the verb must agree with the plural subjects "*garcon et filles*", while *livrer* is incorrectly used because it is the second part of a double verb construction, and must therefore be in the infinitive.

Carol also conjugates "*aller*" *and* "*être*", irregular verbs, correctly (*chien est, tu es, chien va*). Subject pronouns also seem to be a strength in Carol's writing as they are always used correctly (7 times in total). The possessive

preposition *de* is used correctly 3 times (*maison de garcon et filles, panier de bonbon, maison de la chien*).

4.1.1.2 Carol's Weaknesses.

The most apparent weakness in Carol's writing is definite article agreement (*le/ la /les*). Carol uses the wrong definite article 27 times (*la garçon, la chien, la lapin*), and only uses the correct form 3 times (*le chien*).

Words are inappropriately used in 14 instances. The sentences in which they appear are presented in Table 4.1.1.2a, with the words coded as inappropriate in bold.

Table 4.1.1.2a: Carol's inappropriate word use

1	Voici l'histoire d'une chien **que** veux la pâques lapin.
2.	La chien a jaloux de la paques lapin, **pourquoi** la lapin done la bonbon...
3.	Alor la chien s'habille **en** comme la pâques lapin.
4.	**Alor son pas** pâques dimanche!
5.	Tout le garçon et filles rire **en** pâques chein.
6.	"**Alor**, tu ne peux pas **pourqoi**, tu es **allergie** de bonbon!"
7.	"Tu es **droit!**"
8.	La chien rèalize **qui** il beaucoup **quelque** être un chien
9.	La chien rèalize **qui** la garcon et filles aime la chien juste la **route** il est.
10.	Alor, **chacune** paques dimanche, la chein aide la pâques lapin...

The words *"Alor son pas"* are coded as inappropriate because they do not make sense in that context. It is likely that Carol meant to say, "*Alors, ce n'est pas*". The role of "*quelque"* in Sentence 7 is less clear. In a number of cases, Carol substitutes words for related words, apparently having confused their meaning.

In Sentences 1, 7, and 8, she uses "*qui*" in place of "*que*", and vice versa. She similarly appears to confuse "*pourquoi*" and "*parce que*", as seen in Sentences 2 and 6. In Sentences 7 and 9, Carol uses inappropriate words because she is translating literally from English. Sentence 3 presents a particular interesting mistake. Although *"en"* is incorrectly used, the sense of the word in that context is correct if the end of the sentence were restructured so that a noun followed immediately after. For example, if Carol had written *"la chien s'habille en vêtements de lapin"* the sentence would have been correct. In sentence 5, *"en"* is used to in place of "*au*" – the contraction of the preposition "*à*" and definite article "*le*". Last, Carol uses "*chacune*" instead of "*chaque*" in Sentence 10.

In addition to incorrect use of words, some necessary words are missing in some of Carol's sentences. Carol forgets to include the verb *"être"* in her first sentence "*Voici l'histoire d'une chien que veux (être) la pâques lapin*". In other places she omits articles (*done la bonbon à (les) garcon et filles, le chien va à (le) pâques lapin*), or prepositions (*la chien va (à) la garcon et filles*).

Carol makes a number of spelling and grammatical spelling (i.e. accent) errors as can be seen in Tables 4.1.1.2b and 4.1.1.2c

Table 4.1.1.2b: Carol's spelling errors

	Error	Correction
1.	Alor	Alors
2.	Alor	Alors
3.	chein	chien
4.	done	donne
5.	heureax	heureux
6.	pourqoi	pourquoi
7.	puit	puis

Table 4.1.1.2c: Carol's incorrect accent use

	Error	Correction
1.	garcon	garçon
2.	garcon	garçon
3.	etre	être
4.	pàques	Pâques
5.	rèalize	réalize
6.	etre	être
7.	garcon	garçon
8.	rèalize	réalize
9.	garcon	garçon

4.1.2 Analysis of Barry's Written Language Skills

Barry was termed by the classroom teacher as an "average" student. The results of my analysis of his writing are shown in Table 4.1.2.

Table 4.1.2: Summary of coding results for Barry

Code name	Correct	Incorrect
Definite article agreement (Gr. 4)	6	10
Indefinite article agreement (Gr. 4)	3	1
Partitive article agreement with nouns (Gr. 6)		1
Subject pronouns (Gr. 4)	10	
Adjectival agreement with nouns (Gr. 5)	1	
Adverbs (Gr. 6)	6	
Adverbial expressions	6	
Present tense of *er* verbs (singular) (Gr. 4)	18	5
Present tense of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs (Gr. 6)	10	
Double verb constructions (Gr. 7)	1	
Modal verbs *vouloir, pouvoir*, and *devoir* (Gr. 7)	2	
Prepositions of place (Gr. 4)	3	
Possessive preposition *de* (Gr. 4)	2	
Question words (Gr. 5)	2	
Negation (Gr. 5)	1	
Conjunctions (Gr. 6)	14	
Spelling		6
Grammatical spelling: accents		18
Grammatical spelling: contractions preceding vowels		14
Grammatical spelling: contractions with prepositions (Gr. 7)		2
Word order	17	3
Inappropriate word		4
Missing words		2

4.1.2.1 Barry's Strengths.

Barry shows a number of strengths. First, he correctly uses conjunctions14 times – "*et*" is used 12 times, and "*mais*" is used twice. In

addition, he correctly uses subject pronouns ten times. Though most of Barry's sentences are fairly simple, their word order is correct. Tables 4.1.2.1a and 4.1.2.1b provide the outcomes of my analysis of Barry's use of word order.

Table 4.1.2.1a: Barry's use of correct word order

1.	tout a coup elle voit un singe.
2.	Marie et le singe parle.
3.	Tout a coup le singe court et court.
4.	Marie a tre tre triste.
5.	Marie et le elephant parle.
6.	Tout a coup le elephant marche et marche mais il tombe dans un lac.
7.	Marie conduit le auto.
8.	Elle sauté le auto surdessus le edifice de empire state.
9.	Mais le singe change a la king kong et il sauté a la auto de Marie.
10.	Tout a coup le auto retombees de la ciel.
11.	Marie et king kong parle.
12.	King kong veut sauter dehors de le auto.
13.	Quand king kong sauté dehors de le auto, le auto lancer en hant dan la ciel.
14.	Marie pance et pance.
15.	Tout a coup elle tombe dehors la ciel.
16.	Quand ele tombe dehors le auto le elephant court et court.
17.	Le elephant court sur marie et marie n'voit pas.

I will briefly explain the sentence construction errors presented in Table 4.1.2.1b.

Table 4.1.2.1b: Barry's incorrect use of word order

1.	Apres, Marie parle avec le mere de Pierre elle marche et marche.
2.	Elle marche et marche elle voit un elephant.
3.	Marie marche et marche elle voit un auto.

In sentence 1, the sentence requires either the subordinating conjuction "*Après que* Marie..." or with the past participle linking phrase "*Après avoir parlé à*..." in order to be correct. Both of these structures, however, are beyond the level of what is taught in CF at elementary school. Sentences 2 and 3 need a conjunction between "*marche*" and "*elle*" in order to be correct. As they stand they are two complete sentences combined together without the appropriate conjunction or punctuation.

In addition to word order, Barry uses irregular "*ir*" and "*re*" verbs effectively in the present tense. He conjugates *courir*, *conduire*, and *voir* correctly on every occasion that they appear in the story, though he only ever uses them in the 3rd person singular tense (*elle voit, le singe court, Marie conduit*). Barry generally conjugates "*er*" verbs correctly in the present tense as can be seen in the Table 4.1.2.1c.

Table 4.1.2.1c: Barry's correct use of er verbs

	Correct
1.	parle
2.	marche
3.	marche
4.	parle
5.	marche
6.	marche
7.	parle
8.	marche
9.	marche
10.	tombe
11.	marche
12.	marche
13.	change
14.	parle
15.	pance
16.	pance
17.	tombe
18.	tombe

Barry's application of indefinite article agreement is quite good as he uses them correctly 3 times in the story (*un singe, un elephant, un lac*) and incorrectly once (*un auto*). He also uses prepositions of place (*dans un lac*) correctly.

4.1.2.2 Barry's Weaknesses.

Although Barry spells most of his er verbs correctly, "*sauter*" is an exception: Barry misspells it 3 times. (see Table 4.1.2.2a below). In addition, Barry uses "*lancer*" in the infinitive instead of conjugating it, and "*retomber*" is misspelled at the end.

Table 4.1.2.2a: Barry's incorrect use of er verbs

	Error	Correction
1.	sauté	saute
2.	sauté	saute
3.	retombees	retombe
4.	sauté	saute
5.	lancer	lance

Although Barry misspells the verb "*penser*" both times that he uses it, I do not code it as a verb conjugation error because he conjugates the end of the verb correctly. It is, however, coded as a spelling error.

Barry's general and grammatical spelling is weak. In his story, he misuses or forgets accents 18 times, as can be viewed in Table 4.1.2.1b. In fact, he only uses accents over the verb "*sauté*' in places where they are not needed.

Table 4.1.2.2b: Barry's incorrect accent usage

	Error	Correction
1.	Apres	Après
2.	mere	mère
3.	a	à
4.	a	à
5.	elephant	éléphant
6.	sauté	saute
7.	elephant	éléphant
8.	sauté	saute
9.	a	à
10.	sauté	saute
11.	elephant	éléphant
12.	edifice	édifice
13.	a	à
14.	a	à
15.	a	à
16.	a	à
17.	elephant	élephant
18.	elephant	éléphant

In addition, he misspells 6 words, as can be seen in Table 4.1.2.2c.

Table 4.1.2.2c: Barry's incorrectly spelled words

	Error	Correction
1.	tre	très
2.	tre	très
3.	hant	haut
4.	dan	dans
5.	pance	pense
6.	pance	pense

Barry seems to omit silent letters for *"tre"* and *"dan"*, an error which points to phonological influence.

Table 4.1.2.2d shows instances where contractions preceding vowels are necessary in Barry's story. Barry consistently omits contractions for articles preceding vowels.

Table 4.1.2.2d: Barry's use of contractions

	Error	Correction
1.	le auto	l'auto
2.	le auto	l'auto
3.	le auto	l'auto
4.	le auto	l'auto
5.	le auto	l'auto
6.	le auto	l'auto
7.	le auto	l'auto
8.	le auto	l'auto
9.	le edifice	l'édifice
10.	Le elephant	l'éléphant
11.	le elephant	l'éléphant
12.	le elephant	l'éléphant
13.	le elephant	l'éléphant
14.	n'voit	ne voit

On the one occasion where a contraction is attempted, it is used in a context where no contraction is necessary (*Marie n'voit pas*).

4.1.3 Analysis of Avery's Written Language Skills

Avery represents the student whom the teacher selected as a "strong learner". Table 4.1.3 shows the coding results of Avery's story.

Table 4.1.3: Summary of coding results for Avery

Code name	Correct	Incorrect
Noun agreement (Gr. 4)	3	1
Definite article agreement (Gr. 4)	15	7
Indefinite article agreement (Gr. 4)	2	
Partitive article agreement with nouns (Gr. 6)		1
Subject pronouns (Gr. 4)	12	
Adjectival agreement with nouns (Gr. 5)	1	3
Possessive determiners (Gr. 6)	1	
Adverbs (Gr. 6)	5	1
Adverbial expressions	1	
Present tense of *aller* (singular and plural) (Gr. 6)	2	
Present tense of *avoir* (singular) (Gr. 4)	1	
Present tense of *er* verbs (singular) (Gr. 4)	26	8
Present tense of *être* (Gr. 4-5)	2	
Present tense of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs (Gr. 6)	3	4
Verb agreement with compound subjects (Gr. 7)		1
Prepositions of place	9	6
Possessive preposition *de* (Gr. 4)	1	
Question words (Gr. 5)	2	
Negation (Gr. 5)	2	
Conjunctions (Gr. 6)	19	
Expressions with *avoir* (Gr. 5)	2	
Expressions with *en*	1	
Spelling		12
Grammatical spelling: accents	19	15
Grammatical spelling: contractions preceding vowels	13	4
Grammatical spelling: contractions with prepositions (Gr. 7)	2	1
Word order	17	9
Inappropriate word		6
Word missing		3

4.1.3.1 Avery's Strengths.

Avery shows a number of grammatical strengths. First, she uses conjunctions very effectively; specifically, she uses *"et", "mais", "parce que",* and *"puis"* correctly 19 times in her story. She also uses subject pronouns (*il voit*) and prepositions of place (*à New York*) correctly. Although only three-quarters of Avery's sentences are syntactically correct, they do demonstrate considerable knowledge of French word order. Tables 4.1.3.1a shows her sentences which use correct word order.

Table 4.1.3.1a: Avery's use of correct word order

1.	Super-Fred habite dans l'eau.
2.	Il protège le humain parse-que le géant mouché manger les humain.
3.	Un jour, Jordan va à New York et il regarde pour les humain qui manger.
4.	L'humain à peur.
5.	Toute-a-coupe Super-Fred saute au pentagone et voit Jordan, à langue, mais Jordan volé en haut.
6.	Super-Fred court après Jordan.
7.	Jordan volé dans la poubelle et nagé dans les ordures.
8.	Quand il est dans la poubelle il pense-qu'il est aidé l'humain par manger l'humain mais Super-Fred pense-qu Jordan est très, très méchant.
9.	Toute-a-coupe Jordan saute de la poubelle et voler.
10.	Puis, Super-Fred va à l'école.
11.	Kevin à un couteau.
12.	Super-Fred saute très haut mais Kevin volé et Super-Fred tombe.
13.	Il pense-que il cassé la jambe.
14.	Super-Fred s'assoit sur le pepeteré et dorment.
15.	Jordan et Kevin court très loin au Ontario.
16.	Quand Super-Fred s'levé il à faim.
17.	Super-Fred visiter l'hopital et il jambe ne cassé pas.

Sentences 8 and 17 appear to have incorrect word order, but Avery's errors in those sentences are from incorrectly employing other grammatical elements. In sentence 8 Avery writes "*est aidé*" to imply "is helping". Though she is not using the verb correctly, the verb is in the correct place in the sentence. The same is true for Sentence 17, where Avery writes "*il jambe ne cassé pas*". The correct form is "sa jambe ne s'est pas cassée." However, as Avery has not yet learned the past tense she cannot be expected to know the syntactical changes that are used when using the *passé composé* in such a sentence. To the best of Avery's knowledge her sentence is correct, because the verb "*casser*" is placed between "*ne*" and "*pas*" which is where it would belong if the verb was in the present tense.

In addition to these sentences, 9 of Avery's sentences are incorrect as are shown in Table 4.1.3.1b.

Table 4.1.3.1b: Avery's use of incorrect word order

1.	Le géant grenouille qui s'apple Super-Fred.
2.	Le géant mouche qui s'apple Jordan.
3.	Super-Fred cherché pour Jordan mais, il ne trouve pas lui.
4.	Pendant Super-Fred cherché pour Jordan, il mange les ordures.
5.	Il pense-que il au paradis.
6.	Super-Fred saute de Jordan et manger lui.
7.	Dans l'école sais une géant oie, le géant oie sais l'amie de Jordan.
8.	Le géant oie qui s'apple Kevin.
9.	Pendant Super-Fred dormer kevin coupé il avec sa couteau et aidé Jordan.

Avery improperly includes "*qui*" in Sentences 1, 2, and 8. Sentence 5 is missing a verb. "*Pendant*" is used as a subordinating conjunction in Sentences 4 and 9 and thus requires "*que*" after it (*Pendant que Super-Fred...)* to be grammatically correct. The word order in Sentences 3, 6, and 9 are incorrect. In Sentence 3 the object pronoun at the end of the sentence should be placed between "*ne*" and "*trouve*" *(ne le trouve pas)* and should be a direct object (*le*) rather than an indirect object *(lui)*. Sentence 8 should have a direct object (*Kevin le coupe*) instead of a subject pronoun (il) and the direct object should be placed between the subject and the verb, not after the verb, as is common in English. Last, Sentence 7 is a run on sentence.

Although Avery does not use contractions with prepositions frequently in her story, their correct use is nonetheless significant as they are an advanced grammatical element. Avery uses these contractions correctly on 2 occasions, as shown in Table 4.1.3.1c.

Table 4.1.3.1c: Avery's correct use of contractions with prepositions

1.	Super-Fred saute **au** pentagone...
2.	Il pense-qu'il **au** paradis.

Avery also uses the partitive article incorrectly in one instance. At the end of her story she writes "*Kevin et Jordan court très loin* ***au*** *Ontario.*" Although this follows the rule of combining prepositions and articles (*à* + *le*), it is incorrect because, as a location name beginning with a vowel, Ontario should be preceded by "*en*".

Avery generally uses definite articles correctly. That is, the definite articles she uses agree with their corresponding nouns 15 times out of 22.

Avery uses the irregular verbs *avoir, être*, and *aller* in her story. They are correctly conjugated, but every time she conjugates *avoir*, she adds an *"accent grave"*, (i.e. *à faim*) making it look like the preposition "*à*".

4.1.3.2 Avery's Weaknesses.

Sixteen prepositions appear in the story, 9 of which are used correctly in their contexts. These are shown in Table 4.1.3.2a.

Table 4.1.3.2a: Avery's correct use of prepositions

1.	Super-Fred habite **dans** l'eau.
2.	Super-Fred court **après** Jordan.
3.	Jordan volé **dans** la poubelle...
4.	...et nagé **dans** les ordures.
5.	Jordan saute **de** la poubelle et voler.
6.	Puis, SuperpFred va **à** l'école.
7.	**Dans** l'école l'école sais une géant oie,...
8.	Super-Fred s'assoit **sur** le pepeteré et dorment.
9.	Kevin coupé il **avec** sa couteau et aidé Jordan.

Sentence 7, can be viewed as correct or incorrect, depending on how the writer's meaning is interpreted. If Avery means to convey that the goose is **inside** the school, her sentence is correct. If she simply meant **at** school, she should have used "***à***", as she does in the preceding sentence. I am assuming that she intentionally differentiates between the school as a *place* and the space *inside* it in Sentence 7.

The other 5 prepositions, shown in Table 4.1.3.2b, are incorrectly used, though they are very logically applied.

Table 4.1.3.2b: Avery's incorrect use of prepositions

1.	...il regarde **pour** les humain qui manger.
2.	Super-Fred cherché **pour** Jordan mais, ...
3.	... et voit Jordan **à** langue, mais...
4.	Pendant Super-Fred cherché **pour** Jordan, il...
5.	il pense-qu'il est aidé l'humain **par** manger l'humain...
6.	Super-Fred saute **de** Jordan et manger lui.

Sentence 1 contains a translation error. Avery has translated what she wants to say (i.e., looks for humans to eat) almost word for word into French. However, "looks for" in French is "*chercher*", not "*regarde pour*". Her sentence should simply say "*il cherche les humains...*". The preposition *pour* is misused in the same context in Sentences 2 and 4. In Sentence 3 Avery uses "*à langue*" when she probably meant to say "*de loin*". Sentence 5 contains the preposition *par*, used exactly as it would be in an English sentence (he thinks that he is helping the human **by** eating the human). Though "*par*" has the correct meaning, it is not generally used preceding verbs. The sentence can be corrected by changing it to "*il pense qu'il aide l'humain **en mangeant** l'humain*", but the use of the present participle with *en* is well beyond the grammatical level expected of CF students in elementary school. Lastly, in Sentence 6 Avery uses the preposition "***de***", though it does not make logical sense in the sentence. It seems more likely that Avery meant to say "*saute **sur** Jordan et manger lui*".

Avery misspells a number of words which are displayed in Table 4.1.3.2c.

Table 4.1.3.2c: Avery's misspelled words

	Error	Correction
1.	s'apple	s'appelle
2.	parse-que	parce que
3.	s'apple	s'appelle
4.	Toute-a-coupe	tout à coup
5.	pense-que	pense que
6.	pense-qu'	pense qu'
7.	pense-que	pense que
8.	Toute-a-coupe	tout `a coup
9.	s'apple	s'appelle
10.	pense-que	pense que
11.	pepeteré	pupitre?
12.	s'levé	se leve

In addition, her story contains a number of words that do not make sense in the context in which they are used. These are listed below in Table 4.1.3.2d. Table

4.1.3.2d: Avery's inappropriate word use

1.	Le géant grenouille **qui** s'apple Super-Fred.
2.	Le géant mouché **qui** s'apple Jordan.
3.	Jordan va à New York et il regarde pour les humain **qui** manger.
4.	Super-Fred...voit Jordan à **langue,** mais, Jordan volé en haut.
5.	Dans l'école **sais** une géant oie, le géant oie **sais** l'amie de Jordan.
6.	Le géant oie **qui** s'apple Jordan.

In Sentences 1, 2, and 6 Avery, inserts "*qui*" where it is not needed. In Sentence 3 "*qui*" is used in place of the preposition "*à*". The role of "*à langue*" in Sentence 4 is unclear, though Avery may have intended to say "*de loin*" or something of the sort. The use of "*sais*" in Sentence 5 makes sense in the second part of the sentence (*le géant oie sais l'amie de Jordan*) but not in the first half (*Dans l'école sais une géant oie*). It seems curious that Avery uses "*sais*" in an instance where its meaning makes sense, and also where it does not make sense at all. As will be discussed later in this chapter, it may be that Avery is using "*sais*" in place of "*c'est*" because they sound the same.

Avery's conjugation of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs are also weak, as can be seen from Tables 4.1.3.2e and 4.1.3.2f.

Table 4.1.3.2e: Avery's correct use of ir and re verbs

1.	Super-Fred	voit
2.	Super-Fred	court
3.	Super-Fred	s'assoit

Table 4.1.3.2f: Avery's Incorrect use of ir and re verbs

1.	oie	sais
2.	Super-Fred	dorment
3.	Super-Fred	dormer
4.	Jordan et Kevin	court

In Avery's story, *er* verbs are conjugated correctly 26 times and incorrectly eight times. Among many of her verbs, however, Avery adds accents on the ends, making the verb look like a past participle (volé, cherché).

Table 4.1.3.2g: Avery's correct er verbs in the present tense

	Subject	Verb
1.	grenouille	s'apple (s'appelle)
2.	Super-Fred	habite
3.	Il	protège
4.	mouche	s'apple (s'appelle)
5.	il	regarde
6.	Jordan	volé
7.	Super-Fred	saute
8.	Jordan	volé
9.	il	trouve
10.	Jordan	nagé
11.	Super-Fred	cherché
12.	Super-Fred	cherché
13.	il	mange
14.	il	pense-que
15.	Kevin	volé
16.	Kevin	coupé
17.	il	pense-qu'
18.	Kevin	aidé
19.	Super-Fred	pense-que
20.	Jordan	saute
21.	Super-Fred	s'levé
22.	Super-Fred	saute
23.	oie	s'apple (s'appelle)
24.	Super-Fred	saute
25.	Super-Fred	tombe
26.	il	pense-que

Avery frequently adds unneeded accents at the end of her verbs such as those typical of past participles.

Table 4.1.3.2h: Avery's incorrect er Verbs in the present tense

	Subject	Verb	Correction
1.	mouché	manger	mange
2.	il	est aidé	aide
3.	il	manger	mange
4.	il	cassé	s'est cassé
5.	Jordan	voler	vole
6.	Super-Fred	manger	mange
7.	Super-Fred	visiter	visiter
8.	il (sa) jambe	cassé	s'est cassée

In some cases, Avery does not conjugate the verbs, but leaves them in the infinitive (*i.e., manger, visiter*). Avery's use of *Casser* is an interesting case, as it is a reflexive verb. In Avery's story, the past tense is needed to say "He thinks that he has broken his leg" (*Il pense qu'il s'est cassé la jambe*) and "his leg is not broken" (*sa jambe ne s'est pas cassée*). Past tense verb conjugations are a grade 8 level expectation in the *Ontario Curriculum Guidelines for French as a Second Language: Core French* (Ministry of Education and Training, 1998).

Avery's most blatant weakness, however, is her accent usage. She uses accents correctly 18 times and incorrectly 19 times. on the end of *er* verbs.

Table 4.1.3.2i: Avery's incorrect accent use

	Error	Correction
1.	mouché	mouche
2.	à	a
3.	a	à
4.	volé	vole
5.	volé	vole
6.	nagé	nage
7.	cherché	cherche
8.	cherché	cherche
9.	aidé	aide
10.	a	à
11.	à	a
12.	volé	vole
13.	cassé	casse
14.	pepeteré	pupitre ?
15.	coupé	coupe
16.	aidé	aide
17.	s'levé	se leve
18.	à	a
19.	cassé	casse

It appears that Avery misuses accents a lot in her story. Twelve of the 19 errors are from adding unnecessary accents to the ends of verbs, such as are common with past participles (*mangé, volé*). Five of the accent errors are from adding an "*accent grave*" to *avoir* to make it look like the preposition "*à*". Avery also unnecessarily adds an "*accent aigu*" to the ends of "*mouché*". It is unclear which word Avery means to use when she writes "*pepeteré*". Given the context, I am

guessing that she meant "*pupitre*", in which case the accent on the end of "*pepeteré*" is not needed.

4.2 Trends among all three students

This section includes grammatical and phonological trends, beginning with a comparative overview of the students' grammatical production in their writing in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Coding results for all three students

Code name	Carol	Barry	Avery	Ttl	Carol	Barry	Avery	Ttl
	Correct				Incorrect			
Noun agreement (Gr. 4)	5		3	**8**	5		1	**6**
Definite article agreement (Gr. 4)	3	6	15	**24**	27	10	7	**44**
Indefinite article agreement (Gr. 4)	1	3	2	**6**	1	1		**2**
Partitive article agreement with nouns (Gr. 6)						1	1	**2**
Subject pronouns (Gr. 4)	7	10	12	**29**				
Adjectival agreement with nouns (Gr. 5)		1	1	**2**	2		3	**5**
Possessive determiners (Gr. 6)	1		1	**2**				
Demonstrative determiners (Gr. 7)	1			**1**	1			**1**
Irregular adjectives (Gr. 7)	1			**1**				
Adverbs (Gr. 6)	2	6	5	**13**	1		1	**1**
Adverbial expressions		6	1	**7**				
Expressions of quantity (Gr. 6)					1			**1**
Present tense of *avoir* (singular) (Gr. 4)			1	**1**				
Present tense of *er* verbs (singular) (Gr. 4)	8	18	26	**52**		5	8	**13**
Present tense of *er* verbs (plural) (Gr. 5)					1			**1**
Present tense of *être* (Gr. 4-5)	4		2	**6**				
Present tense of *faire* (singular) (Gr. 6)	1			**1**				

Code name	Carol	Barry	Avery	Ttl	Carol	Barry	Avery	Ttl
	Correct				Incorrect			
Present tense of *aller* (singular and plural) (Gr. 6)	2		2	**4**				
Past tense of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs (Gr. 6)	2	10	3	**15**	2		4	**6**
Modal verbs *vouloir, pouvoir, devoir* (Gr. 7)	1	2		**3**	1			**1**
Double verb constructions (Gr. 7)		1		**1**	2			**2**
Verb agreement with compound subjects (Gr. 7)					2		1	**3**
Prepositions of place (Gr. 4)		3	9	**12**			6	**6**
Possessive preposition *de* (Gr. 4)	3	2	1	**6**				
Question words (Gr. 5)		2	2	**4**	2			**2**
Negation (Gr. 5)	1	1	2	**4**				
Conjunctions (Gr. 6)	2	14	19	**35**	3			**3**
Expressions with *avoir* (Gr. 5)	1		2	**3**	1			**1**
Expressions with *en*			1	**1**				
Spelling					7	6	12	**25**
Grammatical spelling: accents	17		19	**36**	9	18	15	**42**
Grammatical spelling: contractions preceding vowels	3		13	**16**	1	14	4	**19**
Grammatical spelling: contractions with prepositions (Gr. 7)			2	**2**	2	2	1	**5**
Word order	6	17	17	**40**	9	3	9	**21**
Inappropriate word					15	4	6	**25**
Missing words					5	2	3	**10**

As Table 4.2 shows, the students' stories show considerable variation in grammatical strengths and weaknesses. Despite their differences, I have identified a number of trends, which I describe next.

4.2.1 Grammatical Trends

First I present areas of noticeable grammatical strength. All three students seem to have developed a good sense of Word order in French, as their cumulative score is 40 correct, as compared to 21 incorrect sentences. This may

be related to the fact that they have good command of subject pronouns, verbs, and conjunctions. Subject pronouns are correctly used 29 times, and are never incorrectly used. The various verbs that they employ in their writing are correctly conjugated more often than not, and they use conjunctions correctly 35 times and incorrectly only 3 times.

All three students struggle with agreement between definite article and noun gender. Of the definite articles used, 24 agree with the gender of the nouns they modify, while 44 do not. Students also frequently misspell their words, including using accents incorrectly.

4.2.2 Student performance by grade level

As my study examines how well students learn the grammatical elements outlined in the Ontario Expectations for CF, the findings are presented by grade level in Table 4.2.2 so that one can easily view how they score for every grade.

Table 4.2.2: Student performance by grade level

Code name	Carol	Barry	Avery	Ttl	Carol	Barry	Avery	Ttl
	Correct				Incorrect			
Noun agreement (Gr. 4)	5		3	8	5		1	6
Definite article agreement (Gr. 4)	3	6	15	24	27	10	7	44
Indefinite article agreement (Gr. 4)	1	3	2	6	1	1		2
Subject pronouns (Gr. 4)	7	10	12	29				
Prepositions of place (Gr. 4)		3	9	12			6	6
Possessive preposition *de* (Gr. 4)	3	2	1	6				
Present tense of *avoir* (singular) (Gr. 4)			1	1				
Present tense of *er* verbs (singular) (Gr. 4)	8	18	26	52		5	8	13
Present tense of *être* (Gr. 4-5)	4		2	6				
Present tense of *er* verbs (plural) (Gr. 5)					1			1
Adjectival agreement with nouns		1	1	2	2		3	5

(Gr. 5)								
Question words (Gr. 5)		2	2	4	2			2
Negation (Gr. 5)	1	1	2	4				
Expressions with *avoir* (Gr. 5)	1		2	3	1			1
Partitive article agreement with nouns (Gr. 6)					1	1	1	3
Possessive determiners (Gr. 6)	1		1	2				
Present tense of *faire* (singular) (Gr. 6)	1			1				
Present tense of *aller* (singular and plural) (Gr. 6)	2		2	4				
Present tense of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs (Gr. 6)	2	10	3	15	2		4	6
Conjunctions (Gr. 6)	2	14	19	35	3			3
Adverbs (Gr. 6)	2	6	5	13	1		1	2
Grammatical spelling: contractions with prepositions (Gr. 7)			2	2	2	2	1	5
Modal verbs *vouloir, pouvoir, devoir* (Gr. 7)	1	2		3	1			1
Double verb constructions (Gr. 7)		1		1	2			2
Verb agreement with compound subjects (Gr. 7)					2		1	3
Demonstrative determiners (Gr. 7)	1			1	1			1
Irregular adjectives (Gr. 7)	1			1				
Adverbial expressions		6	1	7				
Spelling					7	6	12	25
Grammatical spelling: accents	17		19	36	9	18	15	42
Grammatical spelling: contractions preceding vowels	3		13	16	1	14	4	19
Word order	6	17	17	40	9	3	9	21
Inappropriate word					15	4	6	25
Word missing					5	2	3	10

4.2.3 Trends influenced by Phonological Factors

I will now present a number of findings that are of particular interest because they appear to be influenced by phonological factors. All 3 students make errors that seem to stem from phonological influences. That is students

seem to write what their ear tells them 'sounds right'. This sometimes results in spelling errors. Barry spells *"très"* as *"tre"*, presumably because this is what the word sounds like as the final consonant ("s") is silent. He also spells the nasal in the verb "*penser*" as *"pance"* rather than "*pense*". Carol writes "*Alor son pas pâques dimanche*!". It is possible that she may remember the sound of "*Ils ne sont pas*, and may have tried to use it as a chunk in "*Alor, ce n'est pas pâques dimanche*". Carol also writes "*avec a panier de bonbon*". As "*a*" and "*un*" sound quite similar to an English dominant speaker, it seems possible she may have confused them and chosen "*a*" because it also sounded right. Avery's story is easy to make sense of except for the one place where she writes "*Dans l'école sais une géant oie, le géant oie sais l'amie de Jordan*". At first this sounds odd, but if one replaces "*sais*" with "c'*est*", the sentence makes much more sense. Perhaps Avery erroneously replaced "c'*est*" with "*sais*", a verb that sounds very similar to the expression she is trying to produce.

In spoken French, as in many languages, some word endings are dropped in rapid speech. The phrase *"Je ne sais pas"* often sounds more like *"J'n sais pas"* or even *"J' sais pas"* in informal circles. Both Avery and Barry make contractions in their writing that are grammatically incorrect, but reflect the oral pronunciation of word produced in conversation. For example, Avery writes *'s'levé*" instead of "*se leve*" and Barry writes "*n'voit pas*" in place of "*ne voit pas*".

The last remark regarding possibly phonologically influenced errors concerns the agreement mistakes that Carol makes. Throughout her story, Carol writes "*garcon et filles*" instead of "*garçons et filles*". It is odd that she pluralizes

"*filles*" but consistently leaves "*garçon*" in its singular form. Both of these words sound the same to the ear regardless of whether they are singular or plural. That is, "*garçon*" sounds the same aurally as "*garçons*", and *"fille"* sounds the same as *"filles"*. AIM's emphasis in oral language may also account for her incorrect conjugation of the 3rd person plural of *aimer*, (i.e. *aiment*) which sounds the same as its singular forms (*j'aime, tu aimes, il & elle aime*).

Avery makes a number of overgeneralization type errors that suggest that she may have learned particular grammar rules or expressions and be in the process of refining her understanding of when to apply these rules or use these expressions. For example, Avery writes "*au Ontario*" in her story, demonstrating that she knows the rule concerning contraction use when the preposition "*à*" and the definite article "*le*" occur together. She simply has not learned that this does not occur in instances preceding vowels, and that in this case, *"en Ontario"* should be used instead. Avery also uses accents where they are not needed. She uses an ""*accent aigu*"" at the end of *er* verbs when they are not necessary, (i.e. Jordan *volé*, Super-Fred *cherché*, Kevin *volé*, Kevin *coupé*, etc). Although this is not a desirable habit, it may be that she will in time refine her understanding of accents and will use them correctly for past participles. Avery also uses the *"accent grave"* in a few places where *avoir* is conjugated in the third person singular form (*humain à peur, il à faim*).

The use of French idioms and idiomatic expressions is perhaps the most interesting finding in the 3 students' stories. All 3 use idioms that are typically French. The expressions with *avoir*, such as "*avoir faim*, or *avoir peur*"

that are used in Avery's story appear in the *Ontario Curriculum Guidelines for French as a Second Language: Core French* expectations for Grade 5 (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998). The children also use more advanced idioms. Carol uses "*en*" in a partially correct instance when she writes "*La chien s'habille **en** comme la paques lapin*". Her instinct to use *en* is correct despite her flawed application of the word in the sentence. Furthermore, the use of "*en*" in this circumstance is distinctly French. Carol begins with the French expression and switches mid way to what she knows of English "*comme la pâques lapin*", but she is evidently becoming familiar with native French speech. Barry and Avery both use the expression "*en haut*" correctly (though Barry misspells *haut*). Barry also uses French Word order when he writes the "*edifice de empire state*" rather than the "*empire state edifice*". Last, Avery correctly states "*cassé **la** jambe*" rather than "*cassé **sa** jambe*", a mistake that even lingers among English dominant students in University level French language courses.

Having made note of desirable French idioms, it seems fair to note that the students also use clearly English expressions. Carol clearly translates word for word from English when she says "*fait leur heureax*" (make them happy). She also uses "*la bonbon*" to refer to "the candy" in a context where she probably means to use "*les bonbons*". While the word "candy" can refer to one or multiple candies in English, (i.e. a candy, some candy) the French equivalent "*la bonbon*" must be changed to the plural form (*les bonbons*) in order to refer to *candies*. Carol also writes "*Je veux à etre*" to mean "I want to be". She does not realize that "*être*" in the infinitive includes the sense of "to", making her use of the article

"*à*" unnecessary. Avery makes a similar mistake when she writes "*il est aidé*" to mean "he is helping". In this case, *être* is unnecessary because present tense verbs in French include "is helping". Finally, Barry uses the verb "*marcher*" in the sense of walking, though "*marcher*" has more of a connotation in French of marching or taking steps rather than of simply walking. This error is due to AIM's frequent use of "*marcher*" as a verb to denote walking (particularly in the story *Comment y Aller*) and shows how incorrect input becomes part of the students' knowledge base about the language and emerges in their output. The students' phonological and overgeneralization errors also demonstrate AIM's oral focus and the impact this has on students' L2 development (Maxwell, 2004c).

4.3 Similarities and Differences Between My Participants' Written L2 Production and Maxwell's Findings

Maxwell's (2001) study of CF students' acquisition of French using AIM, reported a number of weaknesses in the AIM method. Though her study focused on oral communication in students who have only studied French for one year, many of their grammatical errors that she noted in her study are similar to those of the students who participated in my study. Therefore, they merit further mention.

Maxwell's (2001) study revealed that students had difficulty using possessive determiners, particularly for the third person (*son, sa, ses*). The students in her study used pronoun subjects (*il, elle*) instead of possessive determiners. This finding is interesting because possessive determiners are significantly absent from the stories of the students in my study. Avery makes

this same sort of mistake. That is, just as in Maxwell's (2001) study, Avery replaces the possessive determiner "*sa*" with the subject pronoun "*il*" when she writes "*Super-Fred visiter l'hôpital et **il** jambe ne cassé pas*". Despite this error, Avery correctly utilizes possessive determiners earlier in her story when she writes "*Kevin coupé il avec **sa** couteau*". Although the gender of the possessive determiner is incorrect, Avery shows that she knows what context the word is used in.

Maxwell also noted that in her students' oral stories, they failed to make contractions with the prepositions "*à*" and "*de*". As her students had only received one year of French instruction, and contractions with prepositions are not introduced in the *Ontario Curriculum: French as a second Language: Core French* Expectations until Grade 7, this is not alarming (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998). However, in my study the students are in grade 7 and they have had the opportunity to reflect on their writing and make corrections. Despite this, only the strong student correctly uses contractions with prepositions in her story. She is also the only student to produce contractions preceding vowels. Such contractions are blatantly missing from Barry's story, (i.e., in the 14 instances where Barry should have used contractions, he omitted them). The omission of contractions is another common error that Maxwell (2001) identified. She reports that students often say "*je aime*" in place or "*j'aime*" or "*parce que il*" instead of "*parce qu'il*". Last, Maxwell reports that students using AIM in her study have difficulty distinguishing between gender, particularly in definite articles (*le/la*), indefinite articles, (*un/une*) and adjectives

(*géant/ géante, méchant/ méchante*). The students in my study also struggle with gender agreement, particularly with definite articles, which scored the highest number of errors (44) in one code.

4.4 Summary of COLT Findings

COLT is a tracking tool for recording the activities, participant organization, content, student modality, and materials observed in an L2 classroom. The following is a summary of my observations during classroom visits using COLT.

I visited the classroom in my study on three occasions over a two month period. On these days I observed a number of activities, including oral story review, gesture review, oral questioning about the story, answering written questions about the story, and story writing. About five minutes of each forty minute class period was spent organizing and disciplining students and giving them instructions. The students did gesture review on two days for about five minutes each time. The teacher orally reviewed the story and asked questions about it for about fifteen minutes on the day the students were given the written question homework assignment on which I based my analysis. The students worked on the questions assignment for about fifteen minutes in class. On the two days that the students were working on their stories while I observed them, individual story writing took up over half of the class period. I requested that I come on days when students were working on the homework assignment and stories that I would be analyzing. As a result of this, I expect that the activities

noted in my observations represent more written work than is typical on an average day, since students only write one or two stories in a year.

During my visits, the classroom activities tended to be teacher led, unless the students were working individually on assignments. The language focus shifted from an implicit focus when the teacher gave instructions or disciplined, to focus on form when the class reviewed vocabulary, to focus on function when students needed help to ask the teacher questions, to a discourse focus when students were writing their stories. The content of activities in the classroom included some classroom management, the AIM story being studied, and the students own stories.

On each day of my observations I observed students speaking, listening, gesturing, writing, and reading French. One day the students also drew pictures of what their homework questions described. On the two days that the students wrote their stories, writing and reading activities dominated the lesson. On the other day there were also listening, speaking, and gesturing activities.

Students primarily used their storybooks and gestures in the class. When writing their stories, the teacher served as dictionary to provide them with words as needed. Often students helped each other by providing vocabulary for each other or correcting one another's answer. Some students also used dictionaries and Atlases to help them write their stories.

I noticed a few other items that do not fall under any category in part A of COLT but may help the reader to better envision the classroom environment. Students often spoke to each other in English, and sometimes helped each other

(One student asked "How do you say 'fall'?" and another piped up, " It's t*omber.*"). Sometimes students asked the teacher questions in English. The teacher then gestured the question for the student, who watched the gestures and repeated the question in French. Then the teacher answered the question in French again using gestures. On some occasions the teacher resorted to English to enforce discipline in the classroom.

4.5 Summary of Findings

As we have viewed a considerable amount of detail in this chapter, I will give a brief overview of the findings from sections 4.1 to 4.4 before discussing them in the next chapter. Carol shows a good grasp of *er* verbs and high frequency irregular verbs such as "*être*", "*aller*", and "*faire*". Her employment of subject pronouns is sold and she is developing an understanding of French Word order. Carol's chief weakness is agreement, particularly with definite articles. Barry, the average student, is similarly strong in *er* verb conjugation and subject pronouns. He also correctly uses more advanced verbs, including double verb constructions, as well as adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and Word order. Barry's weak point is grammatical spelling, especially with accents and with contractions preceding vowels, though his definite article agreement is also weak. Avery, the above average student, shows the same strength in subject pronouns, conjunction, *er* verb conjugations, and Word order use as Barry and Carol. Avery's use of *avoir*, *être*, and *aller* are also consistent. She appears weakest in accent use and agreement, which show development, but still contain a significant number of errors.

As to student scores by grade level, in these stories the students have demonstrated a satisfactory degree of understanding in the grades 4 to 7 areas excepting the students' failure to use agreement between various parts of speech. This weakness is most profound in Carol and least profound in Avery, but it remains a considerable flaw in all 3 students' grammar use. Maxwell (2001) reports similar weaknesses concerning agreement among the AIM students in her study, though Maxwell believes this type of error will be corrected over time.

My observations using COLT affirmed my expectations that the AIM program uses a variety of activities and includes ample opportunity for oral communication. Gesturing clearly served the students well in facilitating comprehension and in recalling vocabulary. How well the AIM methodology served in teaching these students grammar and the influence that AIM may have had in developing their knowledge of French (and causing errors) are the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Findings from Student Analysis

Having presented the results of my analyses, I propose and discuss factors that may have contributed to various strengths and weaknesses in the students' grammar. I also relate the results of this study to other findings regarding French as a second language students' grammatical proficiency, and to the body of L2 theory surrounding it.

A number of grammatical elements are of particular interest and merit closer attention: verb use, spelling, grammatical spelling, and word order. These will be addressed in the following sections.

5.1.1 Verb Use

Verb use is always important in language programs because it is an indispensable part of communication. I will discuss the students' conjugation of regular *er* verbs and irregular *ir* and *re* verbs. As verbs are given considerable attention in AIM from the very beginning of the program because of their critical role in communication, it is not surprising that all 3 students have developed considerable competency with regular *er* verb conjugations. Carol conjugates *er* verbs in the present tense correctly 89% of the time while Barry conjugates them correctly 78% of the time, and Avery 76% of the time The fact that Carol, the weak student, conjugates more *er* verbs correctly than Avery raises the question of whether Carol received help with her story. Though the evidence is by no means conclusive, Carol correctly conjugates the *er* verbs already in the rough

draft of her story, suggesting that she simply knows how to use them. In addition, the teacher described Carol to me as hardworking and motivated. These characteristics are noticeable in the homework assignment that I analyzed, as she makes fewer spelling errors and other simple errors that could be easily avoided by copying correctly from the question. It may be that she has worked hard to learn *er* verb conjugations.

Barry demonstrates the strongest understanding of *ir* and *re* verb conjugations. Barry conjugates them correctly every time (10 times) whereas Carol conjugates them correctly 50% of the time (2 out of 4 times), and Avery only conjugates them correctly 43% of the time (3 out of 7 times). While Barry shows the highest success rate, it should be noted that he uses the same verbs over and over again. *Voir* and *courir* comprise 9 of his 10 *ir* verb usages. Barry also uses *conduire* once. Carol and Avery use a greater variety of verbs. Avery uses *dormir, s'asseoir, [sic] voir*, and *courir*. Interestingly, Avery, like Barry, conjugates *courir* and *voir* correctly when she uses them. Perhaps, these verbs have been frequently used and are very familiar whereas verbs like *dormir* and *s'asseoir* may be less familiar. Carol uses *dire* correctly twice (*dit*) but misspells it the third time (*did*) and uses *rire* in the infinitive instead of conjugating it.

All 3 students conjugate regular er verbs well and irregular ir and re verbs fairly well.

5.1.2 Spelling

It seems that though the students are becoming familiar with sentence structure in French, they are not attending to details such as spelling, and grammatical spelling.

The students' stories are spotted with spelling errors such as "*heureax (heureux), did (dit), pourqoi (pourquoi), parse-que (parce que), s'apple (s'appelle), hant (haut)*, and *pance (pense)*. These may be typos, or simply guesses at how the word should be spelled. Mistakes like "*hant*" and "*did*" look as though they may simply have been mistyped, particularly since Carol, who misspells "*dit*" (*did*), correctly spells it on two occasions in the sentences preceding. Other errors, namely "*s'apple*" (*s'appelle*) and "*pance*" are consistently misspelled. Their authors probably did not know how to spell the word, and guessed rather than looking up the spelling in a dictionary. This is likely also true for "*parse que*" (*parce que*) which appears as though the student sounded it out. While these types of spelling errors are entirely preventable and are not excusable, their presence is not uncommon even in first language writing, let alone L2 classrooms.

5.1.3 Grammatical spelling

There are a number of grammatical spelling errors in the stories as well. Number and gender agreement merits discussion because it is a defining characteristic of written French and a major weakness in the students' writing. The students' stories contain many errors of adjectival agreement and errors in their use of definite and indefinite articles. Adjectives do not appear a great deal in the students' stories but, when they do appear, they are used incorrectly more

often than not. Carol uses adjectives (including determiners) correctly 3 times (i.e., suivant) and incorrectly 3 times (heureax). Barry's story only contains one adjective *(triste)* and it is used correctly. Avery uses the adjective "*géant*" incorrectly 6 times. These adjectival errors may be due to the fact that AIM is a highly oral approach and AIM students are accustomed to learning elements of French aurally and orally before they are introduced to the written form. The difference in pronunciation between adjective endings such as "*géant/géante*", though noticeable enough to a trained ear, may go unnoticed if the teacher does not make an effort to clearly enunciate the difference and point out this difference in pronunciation when students say the wrong form. The onus is on the teacher to speak clearly so that students are able to distinguish the difference in pronunciation, since their aural skills influence their written understanding later on.

The use of possessive determiners (*mon, ma, mes, ton, ta, tes, son, sa, ses*) is significant in its absence. It is unclear whether the students simply did not need them or whether the students altered their story in order to avoid them because they did not know how to use them. Possessive determiners only appear once in Avery's story (*sa couteau*), and though it does not agree with the gender of the noun, she does correctly select the third person (*son, sa, ses*) instead of 1st or 2nd person. In another instance, Avery substitutes the subject pronoun "*il*" (*il jambe ne casse pas*) for a possessive determiner. This substitution is interesting because Maxwell (2001) reports similar replacements

of pronoun subjects (*il, elle*) for possessive determiners (*mon, ta*) by students in her study.

The students' writing samples show that the definite and indefinite articles they employ frequently do not agree with the nouns they are meant to modify. Carol seems to struggle with article usage most, as only 12% (4 out of 33) of the articles she uses are correct. Barry's article usage is correct 43% (9 out of 21) of the time. Avery scores highest: 68% (17 out of 25) of her articles agree with the nouns they are meant to modify.

While agreement is not a grammatical element of trivial importance, it is not surprising that the students struggle with agreement from a contrastive analysis perspective that is, gender does not play a role in the English language. Therefore, for English-speaking students learning CF, the idea that words in French are associated with particular genders is a new concept. Similarly, the idea that they must remember the gender of each vocabulary word they learn is novel to them, as is learning about how gender influences spellings, (i.e., *géant* or *géante*) and article selection (*le/la*). Seen from the perspective of comparative analysis, it is no wonder that beginning level CF students who have no prior gender related language experience in their L1 struggle to remember to make all of these grammatical agreements in French.

Maxwell appreciates the enormity of this task and it is partly for this reason that she designed AIM the way that she did. That is, AIM does not focus on gender agreement until basic fluency is developed (which normally occurs somewhere in the second year) because fluency is AIM's main goal and it is too

much to expect students to develop fluency and attend to these details at once. Maxwell (2001) explains her views when discussing her own study's findings:

> I have done very little form-focused teaching on gender distinction, as my main interest during the first one or two hundred hours of instruction is to accelerate fluency. I question the effectiveness and relevance of the teaching gender distinction prior to emerging fluency in the language. (p. 52)

Maxwell goes on to explain that once her students have reached a certain level of communicative competency, she makes a point of drawing their attention to gender use in the stories they study and in their own speech. Only then does she encourage them to use the appropriate gender in their speech. As my students are in their 3rd year of AIM, they should have had over 200 hours of instruction by now, and should, therefore, be at the stage where they can start to pay attention to grammatical features like agreement.

The AIM program tries to distinguish between gender differences using the gestures. For example, part of the gesture for definite and indefinite articles, as well as possessive determiners involves a finger under the nose to indicate a mustache, or a hand cupped behind the head to show off a hair style to demonstrate that the article or possessive determiner is masculine or feminine. Nevertheless, it may be that not enough explicit grammar instruction is given to effectively explain the role of these differences in the French language. As Maxwell's (2001) chief goal in developing AIM was to accelerate oral fluency, her priority is helping students acquire basic fluency skills quickly. Many gender

differences are fairly subtle to the ear, (*le/la, un/une, géant/géante*) particularly when spoken in passing to the untrained listener, which may account for why students appear to overlook them.

Accent use is weak in all 3 students' stories. Carol uses accents correctly 65% of the time. Avery uses accents correctly 56% of the time. Almost half of these errors come from incorrectly adding an "*accent aigu*" to the end of verbs. Her errors do not appear to follow any pattern. Some of her verbs are correct in her rough draft but incorrect in her good copy. Of the 3 verb endings that were circled by the teacher on her rough draft, 1 was corrected correctly (*manger* became *mange*), one was corrected incorrectly (*voler* became *volé*), and one was kept the same way (*visiter* remained *visiter*). It could be that Avery is making these errors because she is in the process of developing a new level of understanding of accent use. Avery's use of accents on the ends of verbs (volé, cassé) may be an overgeneralization whereby having learned that verbs sometimes have accents on the end, she may over apply this observation to instances where they are not appropriate. Avery may later self correct her accent errors in the same way that young children overgeneralize language patterns (sleeped, rided) when learning to speak, and later learn how to use the correct forms. Barry uses accents 3 times when he writes "*sauté*", but he neglects inserting accents for 15 words in his story that require them. This led me to wonder if he did not know how to insert certain accents using a word processor, as the good copy of his story is typed. I referred to his rough draft to see whether his written version contained any accents and found that he used

the expression "*tout à coup*" 5 times and that he inserted an "*accent grave*" over the "*a*" 4 of those times. Otherwise his did not use any accents in the rough draft of his composition, not even with the verb "*sauter*", which has accents in his good copy. As his accent use is quite unpredictable, it seems possible that he simply is not putting effort into ensuring that his accent use is accurate. Avery overuses the "*accent aigu*" at the end of her verbs, as has been discussed in 5.1.1.

Looking at this issue from the viewpoint of contrastive analysis once again, accents are a new element that students must learn to attend to in French as they are rare in English, and do not play a significant role in how English is pronounced or understood. This suggests that FSL students likely need time and explicit instruction in the ways that accents affect pronunciation and influence meaning in French.

The use of contractions is another grammatical error that recurs in the students' stories. Some of the students in Maxwell's (2001) study make similar mistakes, particularly in instances where contractions are required before vowels (i.e., they write "*Je aime*" instead of "*J'aime*", and "*parce que il*" instead of "*parce qu'il*"). Maxwell (2001) comments that her students with only 1 year of French have not yet had enough exposure to French to develop awareness of contractions in FSL. As a preventative technique, Maxwell (2001) states that teachers should correct students if they do not say contractions correctly during choral review. Second and third year students, says Maxwell, will start to notice this change and self-correct. Two of the 3 students in my study appear to be making some progress in this area. Carol, the weak student, uses contractions

correctly 75% of the time (3 out of 4 times) and Avery, the strong student, uses contractions correctly 76% of the time (13 out of 17 times). Barry, however, never uses contractions correctly, though his story requires their use in 13 places (*le auto, la auto, le elephant*). On the one occasion where he does make a contraction, it is not necessary (*n'voit*). Barry's last error (*n'voit*) suggests that his ear is guiding him, since "*ne voit*" sounds like "*n'voit*" when it is spoken quickly. This error may attest to the success of AIM's largely oral/aural approach. Maxwell (2001), in fact, seems to intend for students to learn contraction use aurally, since she suggests that they will, in time, develop an ability to *hear* if they sound correct. Barry clearly has not yet developed this ability. I suppose this may be due simply to the fact that some students have a 'better' ear for hearing subtle sound differences. In rapid speech, the difference between "Il conduit le auto" and "Il conduit l'auto" can easily be missed by an untrained ear.

5.1.4 Word order

I find all 3 students' understanding of word order is remarkable. Even the 'below average' student shows that she is developing an understanding of French word order, as 6 of her 15 sentences use correct word order. This is a notable accomplishment for a weak student in any CF program. Notice, for example, the complexity of understanding the word order in the following sentence: "*La chien saute à le maison de garçon et filles*". Carol knows that definite articles must be included before the nouns "*chien*" and "*maison*". The preposition "*à*" is correctly used to link the verb to the prepositional phrase following it, and the preposition *de* connects the direct object "*maison*" to its

possessers, "*garçon et filles*". Last, the conjunction "*et*" is correctly used to connect "*garçon*" and "*filles*".

Though Carol makes numerous agreement errors, her sentence is comprehensible because the various parts of speech are correctly used. What makes this feat so remarkable is that none of the students were given templates to use to write their story. The writing expectations given in the Ontario Curriculum for grade seven CF state that students should be able to "write simple and some compound sentences and questions, using familiar and new vocabulary; write in a variety of simple forms (e.g., letters, poems, descriptions) following a model and making substitutions and minor adaptations to the model" (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 2001, p.19). Rather than "following a model" and making minor adaptations, as the grade seven expectations suggest, the students in my study are producing their own stories so to speak "from scratch". One could argue that they have, in fact, been given several models to work from, and have been studying these models intently for months, since stories comprise the main component of the AIM program. The strength of this method is that stories are a basic form of communication among many people and comprise a part of everyday life. Everyone tells stories, whether they be short anecdotes about what one did that morning, or lengthy descriptions of incidents witnessed on the way to school. The findings of my study suggest that studying the structure of language (i.e., word order) embedded in the context of stories enables students to internalize enough knowledge about French language forms and word order to reproduce these forms on their own in creative written

productions.

Barry also demonstrates some understanding of French word order, writing 85% (17 out of 20) of his sentences correctly. Though a number of Barry's sentences employ the same rather simple format ("*Marie et le singe parle*", "*Marie et le elephant parle*", "*Marie et king kong parle*") he also writes some sentences that are more complex, such as: "*Quand king kong sauté dehors de le auto, le auto lancer en hant dan la ciel*". Barry employs the clause "*quand*" to set up the complex sentence. He includes definite articles where necessary before "*auto*" and "*ciel*" (though they are the wrong gender). In addition, Barry correctly employs the French adverb "*en haut*" to describe the car's flight into the sky.

Although Avery makes proportionately more errors than Barry (62% of her sentences use correct word order), the sentences in her story are also more complex. Ironically, many of her errors in word order result from omitting essential words ("*Il pense-que il [est] au paradis*") or including unnecessary words ("*Le géant grenouille* ***qui*** *s'apple Super-Fred*") in her simpler sentences. Many of her more complex sentences use correct word order, such as "*Jordan volé dans la poubelle et nagé dans les ordures*", and "*Super-Fred saute très haut mais Kevin volé et Super-Fred tombe*". Like Carol and Barry, Avery combines nouns and verbs correctly, and successfully uses prepositions and conjunctions to link parts of the sentences together.

The examples provided above suggest that AIM's focus on accelerating fluency development positively affects students' development of written French: They are able to produce meaningful written products in French, they are even

starting to incorporate native-like French expressions (i.e., *tout-à coup*) that have no equivalent in English, and their language abilities are moving beyond simply word for word translations from English to French. The latter development seems least advanced in Carol's writing and most advanced in Avery's writing. Carol's writing still shows a significant amount of literal translation from English to French (i.e., "*La chien rèalize qui la garcon et filles aime la chien juste la route il est*"). Carol has translated the section "*juste la route il est*", directly from English to say "just the way he is" in French because she does not know the French manner of saying it (*à sa façon*). She is combining what she knows of French vocabulary and the English expression "the way he is" because she does not know the French expression.

However, even Carol shows some progress in her ability to use French idioms. Her use of "*en*" in the sentence "*Alor, la chien s'habille en comme la pâques lapin*" suggests that she senses that "*en*" is the right word to use there, although she has not yet mastered its meaning or usage, and then resorts to translation from English (i.e., she inserts *comme*). Barry and Avery make a number of subtle grammatical choices in their writing that show that they are developing a sense of how the French language is used. For example, they both use "*tout-à-coup*" instead of literally translating "*suddenly*" (i.e., *soudainement*). In his story, Barry writes "*edifice de empire state*" using the French manner of showing possession rather than "*empire state edifice*" as possession is expressed in English. Avery always joins the verb "*penser*" together with "*que*". While "*pense-que*" is not correct, the idea that "*penser*" is followed by "*que*" is

correct. As the verb "to think" is not necessarily followed by "that" in English (i.e., he thinks he is in paradise; he thinks he has broken his leg) this habit suggests that Avery is developing an awareness of the fact that certain words in French are often followed by others, just as the verb "*penser*" is often followed by the relative pronoun "*que*" in French. Avery also uses the definite article following "*cassé*" instead of the possessive determiner "*sa*" when she writes "*il pense-que il cassé la jambe*". Though Avery does not use the reflexive form of "*casser*", her use of the definite article suggests that Avery has been exposed to that form previously and has noticed the use of the definite article in that instance as opposed to the possessive determiner used in that case in English.

In summary, the students' regular *er* and irregular *ir* and *re* verb use is quite good. They make some spelling errors from choosing to sound words out rather than check their spelling. The students' grammatical spelling is least accurate. They struggle with adjectival and article agreement, with contraction use preceding vowels, and with accent use, though Avery, the above average student shows some development in these areas. The students' writing demonstrates a grasp of French word order that far exceeds the Ontario requirements for the Grade 7 CF level. Students are able to formulate simple and complex sentences and can write stories in French on their own without following a guideline from the teacher. In addition, students are reaching a level of comfort with the French language where they can implement native-like French locutions rather than translate literally from English. This is favourable, as it demonstrates a higher level of comfort with and ability to manipulate the French language, which in turn

increases one's communicative competency.

5.2 Student Knowedge per Grade Level Compared to Curricular Expectations

Teachers are required to ensure that their students meet the curricular expectations for their grade level as set out by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. Therefore, it is worthwhile to review how well the students in my study have learned the grammatical concepts set out for CF students in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (1998) *curricular guidelines*. Hence, I will briefly point out the objectives for grades 4-6 that my participants are having difficulty learning. I will not discuss the grade 7 expectations as the students in my study had not yet completed their 7th year and were therefore not yet expected to know the grammar specified for that level.

Definite article agreement, noun agreement, and regular *er* verb conjugations are the only Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (1998) grade 4 expectations that my participants were weak in. Taken as a group, my three participants' definite articles only show the correct agreement 35% of the time. They change their noun forms where agreement is necessary 57% of the time (8 out of 14 times). I did not include nouns that do not require any changes due to agreement in my tally.

The combined score of my participants shows that they conjugate regular *er* verbs correctly in the singular present tense 65% (41 out of 65) of the time, which still seems rather low considering how highly they are used. However, as

mentioned earlier, if one discounts the number of verbs that Avery made that were counted as errors because of incorrect accents (11), the number of verbs the 3 students conjugate correctly changes to 83% (52 out of 63): a much more acceptable rate of success. As for the students' success rate for adjectival agreement with nouns, their adjectives agree 29% (2 out of 7) of the time making this the only clear grade 5 objective that students struggle with.

My participants demonstrate fairly strong understanding of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (1998) Grade 6 expectations. Partitive articles are used incorrectly twice, and are never used correctly. Otherwise students show quite high rates of success in the grade 6 expectations.

The Ontario expectations also stipulate that students should learn how to spell vocabulary correctly for each particular grade level (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998). All 3 students make numerous spelling and grammatical spelling errors, and these can be considered weaknesses in light of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training's (1998) specified curricular expectations.

In conclusion, the students appear to be learning most of the grammatical features expected of them at their grade level quite effectively. Weaker areas involve agreement, spelling, grammatical spelling and, to an extent, regular *er* verbs. In these areas, students show some awareness of grammatical rules and correct usage, but do not employ the grammatical structures correctly on a consistent enough basis to assume that they have learned them.

5.3 Other FSL Studies

I next discuss 2 studies that relate to my findings. First I discuss Lyster's (2004) study concerning the effects of form-focused instruction, recasting, and prompts on students' application of appropriate noun endings. Lyster found that students taught using form focused instruction as part of content based instruction performed better than those taught without form focused instruction, even after delayed post tests. It appears that students do need to study language form. In addition, Lyster found that form focused instruction was most effective with prompts, and less effective with recasts. As my students struggle with similar gender applications, and the learning environment of Immersion is strikingly similar to that of AIM, this study is highly relevant. Lyster's (2004) findings that form focused instruction with prompts are effective may indicate that feedback in AIM should include more prompting and less recasting, which Maxwell recommends.

Although Maxwell's study has already been discussed, I now draw attention to some findings not yet mentioned. First, Maxwell notes weaknesses among her AIM students that do not appear among the AIM students in my study. For example, Maxwell's students never used contractions with prepositions (i.e. *à* + *le* becomes *au*). Avery, however, uses these contractions 3 times in her story (although in one instance it is incorrect). Also, Maxwell (2001) noted that AIM students in her study sometimes used third person conjugations with first or second person subjects (i.e. *j'a sept ans*), explaining that the third person is most frequently used and is most familiar to them. My sample size was

too small to compare success rates fairly and only the weakest student in my study used first and second person subjects. However, she conjugated verbs correctly in these instances (je veux, tu es).

Maxwell's (2001) AIM students demonstrate signs of interlanguaging, that is, instances where students' L1 interferes with their L2 production. For example, in her interview, Maxwell asks the student "*Quel age as-tu?*" (how old are you?) to which some students replied "*Je **suis** 7 ans*" or even "*Je **suis** 7*", even though the correct form in French is "*J'**ai** 7 ans*". In French the verb *avoir*, which means, "to have", is used when describing one's age – one *has* so many years, so to speak. The above students have used *être* instead, which means "to be", thus illustrating that they are drawing from their English experience to say "I *am* 7" rather than using the proper French form. Maxwell also finds that her students attempt to create the present progressive tense, which exists in English (he is bringing) but not in French. Rather the present tense in French *(il apporte)* may be interpreted to mean the simple present tense (he brings), the present progressive, (he is bringing) or the present perfect (he has brought). Students in Maxwell's study try to construct the present progressive in French by combining *être* with the present tense (*est apporte*) or past participle (*est apporté*). Avery attempts to create the English present progressive in my study using the latter *(il est aidé...)*.

Last, Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin's (2007) comparative study of grade 8 CF classes procured interesting findings concerning written skills (although it should be noted that the role of grammar in the evaluation of written skills is not

specifically mentioned in the study). To test students' written skills, students wrote a short dictation, a description of themselves for a magazine, and a paragraph describing their views about a particular topic. Mady, Arnott, et al., (2007) found that students learning through AIM and students in non-AIM programs scored similarly on these written tests. Advocates for AIM may use this finding to promote AIM, reasoning that AIM is not showing worse writing results than other programs and should therefore not be discounted because of its lack of focus on explicit grammar activities. My findings indicate that the students in my study are acquiring most of the grammar objectives mandated by provincial standards. If non-AIM programs are meeting with similar success, Mady, Arnott, and Lapkins' (2007) findings that students from AIM and non-AIM programs scored similarly on the written tests, makes sense. Mady et al., (2007) speculate that the 2 groups' similar scoring on tests may be related to the fact that the AIM and non-AIM programs were more similar than anticipated, since most of the non-AIM teachers had been to AIM workshops and were using AIM materials (and in some cases methodology) in their classrooms.

5.4 Findings and L2 theory

The last portion of my discussion reflects on the theories and methods presented in Chapter 2. I consider the question posed at the end of chapter 2: How well do the proposed theories and methods that have been embodied in AIM actually succeed in enabling CF students to become fluent in French? In my appraisal, I consider AIM's context embedded approach and the effects of grammar instruction on student learning.

5.4.1 *Context Embeddedness*

Because grammar knowledge has proved notoriously difficult for students to transfer from the classroom environment into natural settings, Maxwell (2001), heeded the advice of researchers such as Krashen (1983), Lyster (1990), Harley, Allen, Cummins, and Swain (1990), Stern (1983), and Truscott (2007) and grounded AIM in context embedded interaction, mainly through story telling. To a large extent this approach to L2 teaching appears to be working well in AIM. Students are able to use and reproduce language, which indicates that they have, in Krashen's terms, "acquired" it. As previously noted, the Achilles' foot in AIM lies in students' mastery of grammatical elements that have less impact on overall meaning, that is, students learning CF using the AIM approach acquire language essential to comprehension, but do not appear to attend to spelling and agreement, which are less essential features of oral proficiency. As Stern (1992) sagely forewarns, this weakness may be a side affect of a context embedded language program.

5.4.2 Grammar Instruction

Stern (1992) notes that while context-embedded programs are beneficial in that they present an L2 to students in real life contexts, these programs may also prove a hindrance to student L2 learning as linguistic elements are so "hidden" in context in these programs that students fail to notice them: They are not salient enough. This scenario seems to hold true in AIM. It is difficult to say, however, whether more explicit instruction early on would remedy this problem. Stern (1992) also counsels that too much focus on isolated grammatical details is

unhelpful to students before they develop a basic level of communicative competency because it will lead to a "Humpty Dumpty effect". That is, this approach results in students who can take sentences apart to study grammatical forms in isolation, but do not have the linguistic understanding to put sentences back together, which brings us back to the issue of knowledge transfer. Stern (1992) recommends that students first develop basic fluency so that they can manipulate sentences more easily when studying finer grammatical elements.

The obvious difficulty with delaying explicit grammar instruction until students develop fluency is that students may have fossilized these grammatical errors by that time, which will make them very difficult to correct.

AIM also relies heavily on what Krashen (1983, 2007) calls "comprehensible input". Much of AIM, particularly at the start of a new story, is made up of input that would be beyond students' comprehension level if gestures were not used as an aid (i.e., as scaffolding). The teacher hosting my study as well as teachers interviewed by (Courchesne, 2005; Cox, 2004; Gordon, 2004; Kirwin, 2006) report that their students successfully develop high levels of comprehension using AIM gestures. Their reliance on gesture recedes as they become more familiar with French and the particular unit being studied, which is a positive sign. AIM also relies on Swain's (1985) output hypothesis since students write their own story at the end of the units.

Lyster (2007) describes studies in which students taught with comprehension aids such as songs or raps can only recall the information presented when they use that aid. He suggests that aids, in these cases,

become a hindrance in the long run. While Lyster (2007) supports the use of aids such as gestures, he warns that students should be challenged to communicate without them when they are able so they can develop competency without the support of these aids. This did not appear to be hindering students in AIM programs. Students in my study did not always use gestures to communicate and students in McIntyre's study (2007) stopped gesture use with simple phrases after becoming familiar with words and phrases.

AIM also emphasizes student output. As the program features oral activities such as choral gesture review, and story telling on virtually a daily basis, ALL students get regular and significantly lengthy opportunities for oral output. Students also develop written skills through scaffolded activities. Though no research has been done to support my suspicions, I suspect the stories presented in my study are representative of those that can be expected from AIM students of a similar level.

An instinctive response teachers may have to grammatical weakness is to draw their students' attention to forms by studying them more explicitly. Swain (1985) states that correction is necessary for students to refine their understanding of an L2. Similarly, Mawell (2004b) included feedback on students' grammar production in AIM. Not only does Maxwell (2004b) emphasize the importance of feedback, she also describes the types of feedback that are most helpful at various stages of L2 learning. She views providing feedback as a complicated endeavor, since providing students feedback at the wrong time may confuse them, and providing too much feedback may cause

students to lose confidence in their L2 abilities. Nevertheless, as outlined in Chapter 1, Maxwell, describes a number of scenarios when oral or written feedback is useful:

- During choral reviews, use recasts or questioning to correct oral errors (correcting the error as a group)
- During individual oral interactions, correct only 1 or 2 errors per interaction.
- For written work, the teacher identifies the errors and provides enough assistance for the student to correct the errors without excessive frustration.
- Teachers should never correct errors that are beyond the students' comprehension ability.

It is clear from these recommendations that effective feedback requires a highly skillful and sensitive teacher.

5.4.3 Comparison of My Findings to the Multidimensional Curriculum

Since I reviewed AIM's compatibility with Stern's multidimensional curriculum model in chapter 2, it seems appropriate to consider how my appraisal of AIM compares with my study's findings.

I noted that AIM teaches pronunciation, grammar, and functional analysis, all components of the linguistic syllabus. Given that my findings are based on written work, I do not have adequate evidence to judge whether the students in my study are learning French pronunciation. However, choices made in the students' writing reflect French pronunciation, such as Barry's misspelling of

'*très*" as "*tre*" to reflect the silent "s". Students' acquisition of grammar is easier to evaluate. AIM follows Stern's (1983) recommendations for teaching grammatical elements after students have acquired basic fluency. This shows in my findings, as my students' stories demonstrate considerable knowledge of French sentence structure, but also contain many grammatical errors. Students show some understanding of discourse, a part of functional analysis, in their written stories. They use parts of speech to construct simple and complex sentences. Sentences in their story are also bridged using subordinating conjunctions, such as "*pendant*" (while), and "*quand*" (when) and adverbial expressions, such as "*tout à coup*" (suddenly) to link events in the story. Notably, Carol and Avery's stories show more creativity in sentence structure than Barry's. However, creativity in sentence structure also involves more risk of error in L2 writing. This shows in my findings; Barry's story contains the highest percentage (85%) of sentences that are written with correct word order.

The prominent role of the communicative syllabus in AIM corresponds with my findings. All three students make errors in their writing that appear to be directly related to their oral/aural experience of French. For example, Carol's use of "*son pas*" in her sentence "*Alor son pas pâques dimanche!*" suggests that she knows the sound of the expression she needs, (*ils ne sont pas*) but does not know its written form. Barry and Avery also seem to make grammatical choices based on their oral experiences rather than applying grammatical rules they have learned. Both make contractions with words (*n'voit pas, s'levé*) in instances that

reflect how the phrase is spoken but do not follow French grammar rules for contraction use.

My findings support my appraisal of AIM's incorporation of the cultural syllabus. Because cultural content is weak in AIM, I was unsurprised at not finding cultural references in the students' stories. However, my findings cannot be used to draw any conclusions since they do not accurately represent the students' cultural knowledge, particularly since the students were not asked to include francophone culture in their stories.

Finally, the use of gestures, a tool to facilitate language learning, does seem to help the students in my study. In my classroom observations using COLT, I noted several instances where gestures enabled students to recall words. Students struggling to remember a word would ask for help and would remember the word themselves once the teacher had gestured it to them. This was the only example of AIM's fulfillment of the general language syllabus that I noticed in my findings.

When considering the L2 researchers' theories presented over the last few decades that are represented in AIM, and my findings, it appears that the theories of Krashen (1983), Truscott (2007), Swain (1985), Lyster (1990), and Stern (1983) all hold seeds of insight. The failure of context reduced, grammar based programs led Krashen and Truscott to discount grammar instruction in favour of programs that focus on communicative experiences. In fact, it is becoming apparent that these authentic language experiences are important to L2 teaching, but need not take the place of grammar instruction. Rather, as

Stern (1983) and Lyster (1990) suggest, grammar must be taught within these contexts. Lyster (1999) and Truscott (1999) discuss how students are able to perform well on grammar tests, but fail to use these same grammar skills in natural contexts, though Lyster adds that this problem can be mitigated by teaching grammar context similar to its application in natural settings.

Maxwell has followed Stern and Lyster's advice of teaching grammar, but within natural contexts. That is, while engaging students in an authentic language experience (i.e. listening/telling a story), she includes gestures that facilitate comprehension and point out grammatical elements such as article agreement. Maxwell has found a method to teach grammar, an element of L2 learning that researchers such as Lyster (1990), McLaughlin (1987), and Stern (1983), feel is necessary without compromising the experiential language learning approach that Krashen and Truscott hold as the key to effective L2 learning. As Krashen recommends, students learning through AIM experience the language aurally first, then orally, and last in written form. However, while Krashen (1983) believes that grammatical errors will disappear by themselves as the student acquires more elements of the language, Maxwell feels that grammar should be taught, but should not be the focus until students have achieved fluency.

The context embedded approach to grammar instruction does seem to work to some extent for the students in my study. This is likely due to the fact that input in AIM is quite natural, which makes transfer easier for students. The

students in my study have transferred many elements of grammar into their writing.

Many of the students' grammatical errors show phonological influences, which reflects the major role of AIM's oral component in students' L2 development. Maxwell's emphasis on oral feedback for grammatical errors so that students learn to "hear" the correct forms leads one to believe that she intends her students to attain a native-like ear. This does not seem realistic, as L2 proficiency very rarely approaches one's level of L1 fluency.

Swain and Lyster advocate student output, which plays a major role in AIM. Though my study does not evaluate oral output, the written output of the students in my study is acceptable for CF students at that level. Though it cannot be assumed that the students' success is due to the frequent opportunities given in AIM for producing and refining output, it seems unlikely that the major role of output in AIM has had no influence.

Output is important in that it is necessary for feedback. Swain (1985) and Lyster (1990) support the use of feedback in L2 teaching. Maxwell highly emphasizes the importance of providing students feedback so that they become aware of their errors and can refine their grammatical understanding more quickly. She also cautions that this feedback must be given judiciously so that students receive maximum benefit from it.

Maxwell says teachers must recast student errors. Truscott (1999, 2004) believes that recasts are unhelpful. The problem with recasts, as Lyster (2007) notes, is that students often misunderstand them, particularly in content-based

programs because students' attention is focused on the teacher's message rather than her grammatical form when she delivers it. This is a danger for AIM, as it is also a content-based L2 program. This is why Maxwell gives very specific instructions on how best to recast during choral gesture review. She presents it so that students are required to pay attention to the form for a moment. Because AIM builds on students' oral skills, grammatical accuracy in oral activities is key.

Maxwell says grammar features such as agreement should be given more attention when students have achieved basic fluency. Avery certainly seems to have developed enough fluency to be able to observe these details. Indeed, she seems to be noticing them more than the other two students, which may be because she has achieved a high enough degree of fluency, and they have not. Barry, however, demonstrates quite good understanding of French in his story, although he does not vary sentence structure much, and his story repeats expressions and terms a fair bit. It could be that he does not want to make errors and is compensating for lack of fluency by repeating the structures and vocabulary at his disposal.

5.5 Conclusion

While students struggle with spelling and, in particular, grammatical spelling, their understanding of word order and regular *er* and irregular *ir* and *re* verb conjugations is fairly strong. The grammatical knowledge they demonstrate is, in general, comparable to grade level standards set by the *Ontario Curriculum Guidelines for French as a Second Language: Core French* (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998) except for the students' lack of facility with

grammatical spelling, particularly with those regarding agreement. Maxwell (2001), McIntyre (2007), and Lyster (2007) shed insights on the nature of these errors and propose possible remedies in their studies. Last, my study illustrates theories of Krashen, Lyster, Stern, Truscott, and propositions and theories in action.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

The analytical approach to L2 learning has dominated CF programs in Canada for the last 50 years. Experts who reflect a highly experiential approach, such as Krashen (1983, 2007) and Truscott (2007), argue that analytical methods of teaching are ineffective since grammatical instruction does not transfer in terms of applicability in practical contexts. Lyster (1990, 2007), Swain (1985), and Stern (1983, 1992) support the analytic view that grammatical instruction can be transferable if grammar is taught within authentic language contexts. Lyster (2004, 2007), Swain (1985), and Stern (1983, 1992) also assert that well delivered feedback supports students' learning and accelerates their refinement of grammatical understanding. Despite Stern's (1983) recommendations that CF programs include more context embedded activities, the NCFS revealed that CF programs in Canada in the 1980s still contained many isolated grammar exercises and included few authentic activities or multimodal tools to facilitate comprehension and retention (Le Blanc, 1990). Programs produced after the NCFS made efforts to use more multimodal tools and to include more authentic communicative activities. However, despite Stern's emphasis on integrating the syllabi of his multidimensional curriculum and teaching grammar within communicative activities, the new programs still taught grammar largely in isolation of other syllabi. My interest in AIM stemmed from its seeming ability to meet Stern (1983) and Lyster's (1990) recommendations for an effective CF program since AIM incorporates grammar instruction in highly contextualized language activities and uses a variety of tools to aid

comprehension and retention. Since AIM teaches CF through plays, students experience French in an authentic communicative activity. The use of PDL, gestures, and carefully levelled oral activities allow students to study the play with high levels of comprehension. Grammar instruction is embedded in gestures and choral reviews, and is practiced in written activities about the plays. I was aware of the skepticism among teachers and L2 researchers surrounding AIM's capability for teaching grammar, and did not know of any research that investigated this question. Therefore, I decided to research AIM in light of its ability to teach grammar.

I conducted a qualitative case study in a grade 7 CF classroom to find out how well grammatical elements taught through AIM transfer to student practice. My goal was to analyze students' written work to see to what extent they were employing correct grammar. As part of my study, I observed the classroom on three occasions using the COLT checklist to gain insight into the students' learning environment and tools at their disposal. Following these observations, I obtained copies of three students' creative writing stories and question assignments, which I analyzed extensively to identify grammar elements they used correctly and elements they struggled with. The teacher selected students who represented underachievers, average achievers, and above average achievers in her class.

The findings of my analysis of the students' written work reflected the highly oral and context focused nature of AIM. The students' errors seemed directly related to the structure of the AIM program, which focuses on fluency and word order to enable basic communication first. All three students struggled with

grammatical spelling, particularly with contractions before vowels and agreement. The weakest student uses almost all of her definite articles incorrectly, whereas the average student uses about one third correctly and the above average student uses about two thirds correctly. Many of the grammatical spelling errors that appeared in my study had been previously identified by Maxwell (2001). She found the same weaknesses in the students in her AIM study though, notably, Maxwell's students were only in their first year of CF and were evaluated on an oral basis rather than written basis. Some of the errors made by the students in my study seemed to be phonologically based, an indication that the students used their aural experiences from class to tell them what 'sounded right'. The students' understanding of French word order was very strong, which reflected AIM's focus on fluency. Despite the students' weaknesses in grammatical spelling, they seemed to be employing most of the grammatical features identified in the Ontario Curriculum Guidelines' CF grammar objectives for grades 4-6 to a fair extent in their homework. Furthermore, their understandings of word order in French exceeded the Ontario curricular expectations.

6.2 Implications

Teachers or boards deciding whether or not to use AIM must measure AIM's strengths against its weaknesses. In my study, the students appeared to have acquired basic fluency on a level that exceeded the Ontario expectations for their grade level. However, their grammatical knowledge was flawed in areas such as spelling, grammatical spelling, and agreement. The question that teachers considering AIM must ask themselves is: "To what extent do I value grammatical accuracy in my CF students, in comparison with overall fluency and

communicative competency?" Ultimately, teachers who view grammatical accuracy as of foremost importance may opt for a program that shows more promise for teaching the finer details of French grammar (if such a program exists). Teachers who prefer that their students develop a basic ability to communicate in French before attending to these factors will be attracted to AIM.

AIM's success depends in large part on how French teachers implement it. Though the idea of combining AIM with another method that focuses more on grammar may appeal to some teachers, Maxwell (2004b) warns that AIM is not a program that can be implemented effectively in conjunction with other programs. She states that its design requires *exclusive* use of French during class time and the use of gestures with *all* words to enable comprehension, traits that are more difficult to implement when using AIM simultaneously with another program. Other programs are bound to use words not featured in AIM, and for which no gesture has been created. In such cases, teachers would either have to create a gesture that depicts the word, or use the word without gesturing, which quickly reduces comprehension levels among students and invites the use of English to restore the students' comprehension of the TL. The use of what Maxwell calls PDL is also a key part of AIM's design and is bound to be compromised when AIM is used alongside other programs.

Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin's (2007) study presents thought provoking findings regarding the use of AIM materials in non-AIM classrooms. Despite Maxwell's recommendation that AIM not be used alongside other programs, almost all of the non-AIM teachers were using materials or methods from AIM with positive results.

Another noteworthy point is that because plays in AIM are prepared word for word for the teacher and the student exercises are very structured, AIM may seem like a program that can be taught by teachers who are less competent French speakers. However, AIM will not compensate for a teacher's lack of fluency in French. Poor pronunciation, intonation, and word ordering on the part of the teacher will be reflected in the students' output, since the teacher is their primary model of the French language.

As for myself, I prefer flawed fluency to no fluency at all. However, I cannot ignore that certain grammatical elements, such as gender and number agreement, seem to be treated lightly in AIM. Though lack of agreement does not generally impede comprehension, it is an essential element of the French language and should be learned in order to demonstrate wholehearted respect for and interest in the French language. It seems disrespectful to francophone cultures not to bother with the difficult grammatical elements of their language and to simply learn only enough grammar to be understood. While I can accept flawed fluency in the early stages of language learning, I must ask the next crucial question: "Will the grammatical elements not learned in the early stages of AIM be acquired further on or will these errors become fossilized so that students find them difficult to unlearn?" Maxwell seems confident that students will gradually self correct and overcome these errors but the 3 students in my study still readily made mistakes despite being in their third year of the program. On the other hand, the above average student did show progress toward correcting these errors. One must also consider that many students will not pursue French after Grade 9, and therefore these mistakes should be corrected before then, or

one must accept that these students will continue to speak grammatically poor French.

6.3 Recommendations

In order to mitigate grammatical weaknesses demonstrated in my study, I suggest action that teachers and school boards can take to minimize this problem. First, I would like to emphasize that whatever feedback teachers give their students should be very clear and consistent so that the teacher's meaning cannot be misinterpreted. Although Maxwell describes various types of feedback for oral and written output, it may be that students misinterpret the teacher's feedback (as Truscott [1999] forewarns, and Lyster, Lightbrown, and Spada [1999] note). Consider, for example, Avery's addition of accents at the end of *er* verbs in her good copy, but not in her rough copy. Maxwell recommends that teachers circle errors in written work, and if they think their students need it, they may write the correct answer above. In Avery's rough draft, some of her verbs are circled at the end, indicating that they should be corrected. However, Avery's rough draft contains a few instances where her accent error appears (*mangé*), and the teacher does not circle these errors. Avery may have interpreted this to mean that these words were correct, and subsequently changed a number of her other verbs (that were correct) to the same form. While I point this out as a possibility, I do not suggest that it is probable as Avery corrects her circled verbs in a random fashion: Some are changed to the correct form (*mange*), some are incorrectly changed to the past participle (*mangé*) and some are left in the infinitive (*manger*).

Second, as feedback plays a critical role in AIM, its importance should be made clear to new teachers using AIM from the beginning. School boards providing in-service training to teachers on how to use this program should emphasize the importance of providing consistent oral feedback during choral review as well as written feedback in student work to make students aware of grammatical features they may be missing, such as conjugations with vowels (*j'aime*).

6.4 Future research

I would like to suggest some avenues where future research in this area can be of great use. First, as my study is but one step into a new area of research, it seems prudent to build on my study by conducting further research on students' grammatical skills using AIM. A study of written grammatical skills involving more students, preferably from a number of AIM classrooms, will add greater reliability to my findings about which grammatical elements students learning FSL through AIM acquire.

Furthermore, researchers should investigate whether students in later stages of AIM develop deeper understanding of the grammatical spelling errors they make earlier on in the program. Although the students in my study were in Grade 7, they were only in their third year of AIM, which in most schools is equivalent to Grade 6. Maxwell states that after 100 to 200 hours of instruction, students should have basic fluency and should be able to attend to grammar. Therefore, the students in my study should have at least been making some progress in that area. My students did show some progress. For example, Avery, the strongest student, used two thirds of her definite articles correctly,

while Barry, the average student, used one third correctly, and Carol used almost none correctly. There seems to be evidence of a learning curve for grammar, but it would be rash to make firm judgments based on three students. For this reason, research investigating AIM students' grammatical usage at the end of Grade 8 would be very useful. A comparative study investigating the grammatical understanding of grade 8 students from AIM and non-AIM programs would provide the best comparisons of both programs' potential, since grammatical understanding does not mature until students are advanced in the program. If AIM students do develop heightened grammatical understanding later on, AIM may well be the most successful CF program for developing overall competency in French; however, if AIM students do not learn these elements later on, teachers remain at a crossroads whereby they must choose a program that best meets their goal for their students, be that fluency or accuracy. In addition, if students do not learn these grammatical elements later on, Maxwell may wish to consider how AIM can be altered to improve in this area without compromising the strengths of the program.

Another possible area of research pertains to the use of gestures in AIM. Having to learn and use the gestures in class may discourage some teachers from adopting AIM. Indeed, in Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin's (2007) study, some non-AIM teachers stated that they did not like using the gestures. Even some students from non-AIM classroom mentioned in their interviews that they were glad they were not using the gestures because they did not want to have to memorize the gestures as well as the words and they felt French class was enough work already. Although most of the AIM students commented

enthusiastically about the gestures, some of them commented about feeling childish when they did them, and sensing they were intended for younger students. Although Mady, Arnott, and Lapkin's (2007) study indicates that most students appreciate the gestures and find them helpful for learning, it would be informative to research to what extent AIM's success in oral fluency is grounded in the use of gestures to facilitate comprehension and enable classes to function exclusively in French. This information will inform teachers who are not attracted to the gesture approach as to whether the gestures are dispensable or not. However, research studying the effects of output in AIM must be done before any such propositions can be made.

6.5 Limitations

Though I discuss the students' grammatical strengths and weaknesses in my study, it should be understood that my observations can only apply to these specific students with any reliability, and are not necessarily generalizable for students in AIM programs elsewhere. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2005) recognize the key role that context plays in case study research and warn that case studies findings, as a result, are not generalizable to a larger population unless the factors characterizing the circumstances of the case study are present elsewhere. My findings, therefore, should be considered in light of the students' personalities, classroom experiences, and teacher practices, as these variables will vary to some degree from class to class and will impact the students' learning. My study is a first step into a new body of research and provides detailed descriptions of AIM students' written grammar usage in one setting. Further research on this same topic is needed before generalizations can be

made with confidence concerning AIM's strengths and limitations regarding grammar acquisition.

Also, the students in my study were chosen by their teacher as representative of their given levels (below average, average, and above average). Since these levels are bound to vary between teachers, schools, and socioeconomic districts, they are labels that should only be treated as relative indicators of ability. Last, I collected my data using qualitative case study research methods in order to have the rich contextual information typical of case studies to inform my analysis of the students' written work. Having contextual data to inform my grammatical analysis allowed me to better understand students' grammatical choices and writing abilities. However, the depth of description that I desired limited my sample size. Since my findings are based on a small sample, it is difficult to draw sweeping conclusions, particularly since my findings included grammatical elements that students only used two or three times. However, attending to details such as these are a strength of case study research, since these details, though easily overlooked, may represent important stages of the students' learning. My study does provide a glimpse into the grammatical features that students in the AIM program may use and gives a snap shot of the grammatical proficiency possibilities one may encounter in CF students using this method. Teachers who wish to know about AIM's grammatical strengths and weaknesses will have more resources to inform their teaching practice. Moreover, teachers wishing to use AIM but hesitant because of its lack of focus on grammar need research documenting the grammatical

abilities of AIM students to defend their program choices to school boards and parents.

5.6 Closing Comments

Stern, (1983) a seminal figure in Canadian L2 research, articulated 25 years ago that CF classes needed to teach grammar in communicative contexts. Stern (1983) explains in his outline of the multidimensional curriculum that an integration of grammar instruction and authentic communication enables students to develop communicative skills as well as learn grammar in a manner that they can transfer to their own use. AIM meets Stern's (1983) recommendations in his multidimensional curriculum admirably well. In addition, AIM meets Lyster (1990, 2007) and Swain's (1985) recommendations for effective language teaching by including grammar instruction in context embedded activities and by providing feedback to student output. AIM even accommodates researchers who favour an experiential approach, such as Krashen (1983), because AIM focuses on experiencing the language and using it rather than analyzing the language and practicing skills through isolated grammar exercises. As discussed in Chapter 2, AIM appears to embody researchers' recommendations more closely than other CF programs. Before teachers, boards, and L2 experts dismiss AIM because it transgresses from traditional L2 methodology and uses an unfamiliar approach to language teaching, AIM's potential for developing fluency for CF students should be more closely examined, particularly AIM's ability to teach French grammar, since this aspect is most criticized.

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Appendix A: *Passeport français*

LE PRÉSENT

j'ouvre*	nous ouvrons
tu ouvres	vous ouvrez
il ouvre	ils ouvrent
elle ouvre	elles ouvrent

*I open, I do open, I am opening

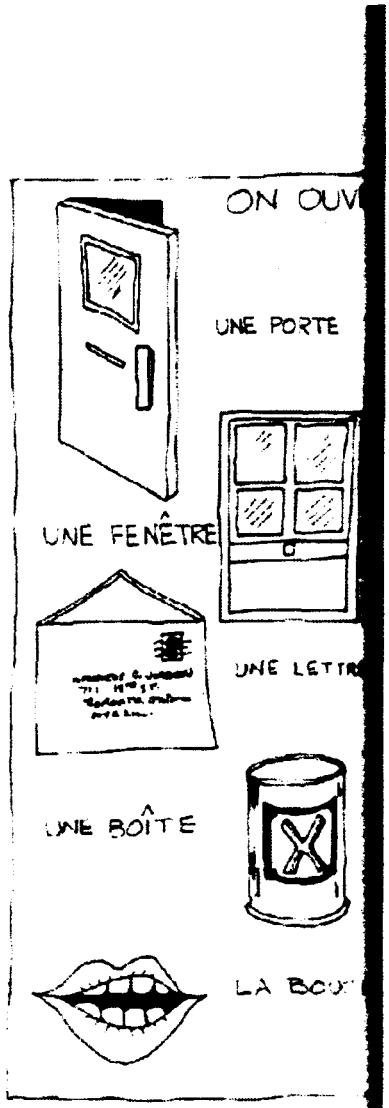
L'IMPÉRATIF

ouvre!	ouvrons!	ouvrez!
open!	let's open!	open!

LE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ

j'ai ouvert*
tu n'as pas ouvert

*I opened, I did open, I have opened



Quel verbe? Ouvrir ou venir?

1. Quand je me couche j' la fenetre
2. Elle me voir tous les samedis.
3. Paul! Jean! ici et vos cadeaux!
4. L'année dernière on la nouvelle école.
5. Pourquoi est-ce que tu la lettre?
   – Parce que Papa m'a dit de l'
6. Ils leur restaurant chaque jour à 11 heures.
7. Il chez moi hier soir
8. ton livre, s'il te plaît

60

Kenney, M. (1975). *Passeport français 6: de nos jours*. D. C: Health Canada, Ltd.

Appendix B: *Horizons*

j'observe!

l'adjectif *quel* (which; what)

masculin		féminin	
singulier	**pluriel**	**singulier**	**pluriel**
Quel jour est-ce?	Quels disques achètes-tu?	Quelle heure est-il?	Quelles scènes montre-t-elle?
Quel homme parle?	Quels amis invites-tu?	Quelle actrice joue dans ce film?	Quelles copines y vont?

les questions

Compare:

l'intonation	est-ce que	l'inversion
Vous jouez au soccer? ↗	Est-ce que vous jouez au soccer?	Jouez-vous au soccer?

Compare:

est-ce que	l'inversion
Qui est-ce qu'elle attend?	Qui attend-elle?
À qui est-ce que tu parles?	À qui parles-tu?
Avec qui est-ce qu'elle arrive?	Avec qui arrive-t-elle?
Où est-ce qu'il va?	Où va-t-il?
Quand est-ce qu'ils rentrent?	Quand rentrent-ils?
Qu'est-ce que vous choisissez?	Que choisissez-vous?
Est-ce que c'est un bon film?	Est-ce un bon film?
Est-ce qu'il prend l'autobus?	Prend-il l'autobus?
Comment est-ce que nous commençons?	Comment commençons-nous?
Pourquoi est-ce qu'elle a peur?	Pourquoi a-t-elle peur?

D'habitude, il n'y a pas d'inversion avec le pronom *je*.

Je commence tout de suite?
Est ce que je commence tout de suite?

Avec l'inversion, on place un trait d'union entre le verbe et le pronom sujet:

Allez-vous au cinéma ce soir?

Si la dernière lettre du verbe est une voyelle, on ajoute «-t-» devant les pronoms *il* et *elle*.

Où va-t-il? Que regarde-t-elle?
A-t-elle un ordinateur? Y a-t-il du pain sur le comptoir?

Attention à la liaison!

Prend-elle des leçons de piano? Vendent-elles leur maison?
Finit-il ses devoirs? Parlent-ils français?

McConnell, G. R. & Collins, R. G. (1985). *Horizons 3*. Don Mills, ON: Addison-Wesley Publishers

Appendix C: *On y va*

La chanson volée

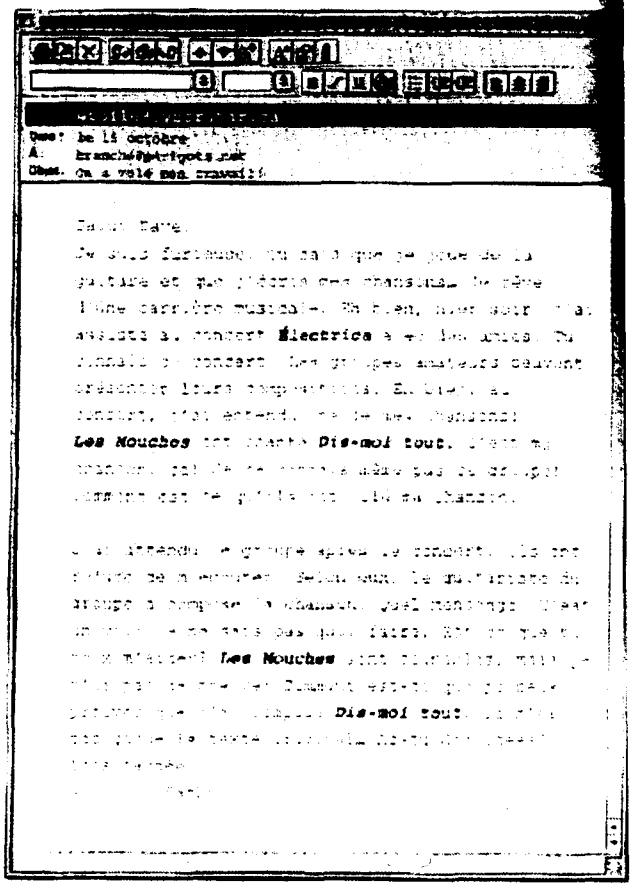
Parlons!

Avant de lire

- Qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire si on veut utiliser le travail d'un ou d'une artiste?

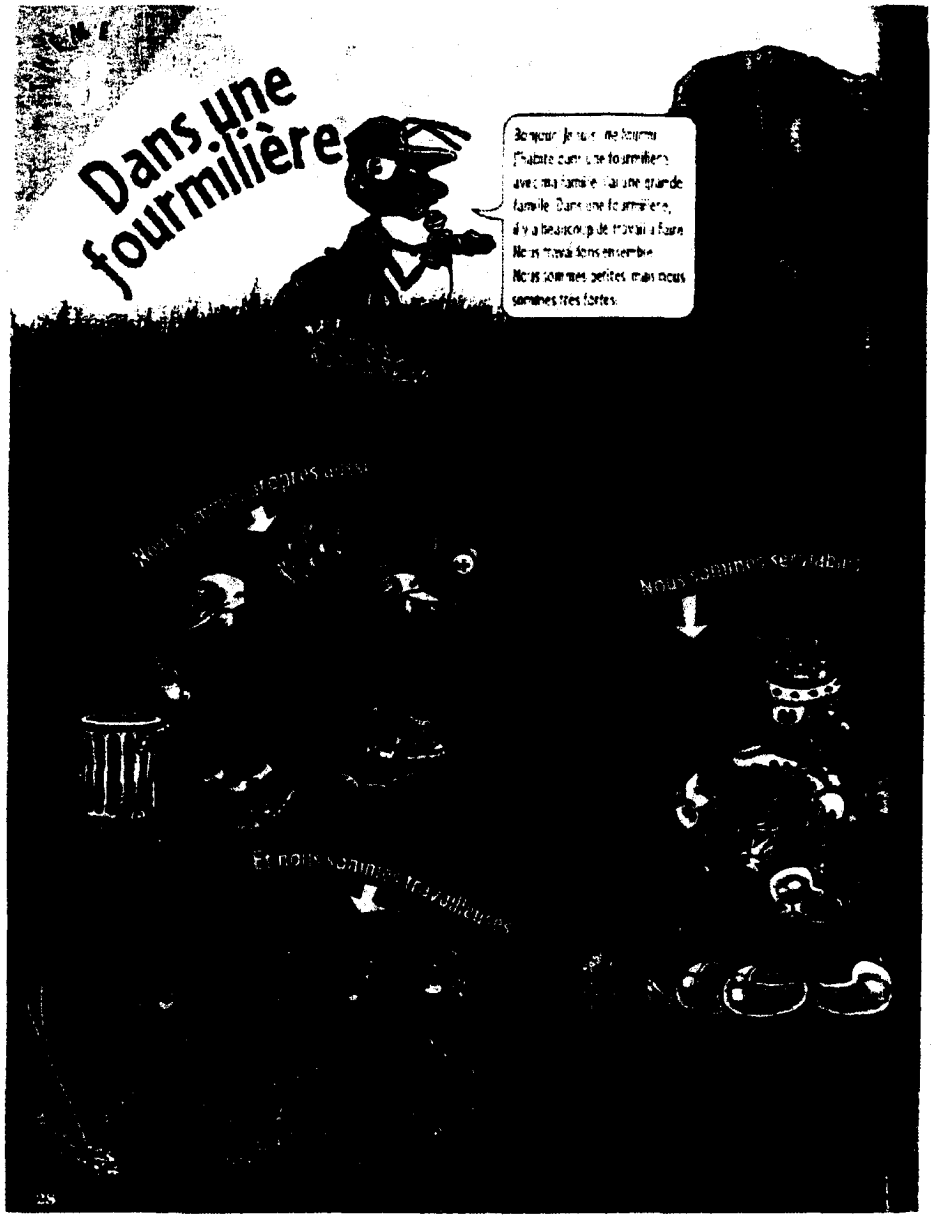
Stratégie de lecture

Il y a beaucoup de mots en français qui ressemblent à des mots anglais. Souvent ces mots ont le même sens dans les deux langues, mais pas toujours! Il y a des mots qui se ressemblent, mais qui n'ont pas le même sens. On appelle ces mots des *faux amis*.



Anderson, D., Chemeris, P., Edgar, K., Masschaele, D., & Salvatori, M. (2001). *On y va*. Toronto: Addison-Wesley.

Appendix D: *Visages*



Mas, J. (1997). *Visages*. Ontario: Addison-Wesley.

Mas, J. (1997). *Visages*. Ontario: Addison-Wesley.

Appendix E: Multimodal Presentation of Information

toi et moi = nous

vous et moi = nous

les autres clients et toi = vous

tes ami(e)s et toi = vous

Henri et Linda = ils

Adam et ses ami(e)s = ils

Marthe et Suzanne = elles

L'accord du verbe

Regarde les phrases suivantes tirées du texte *Le client difficile*

- Adam et ses collègues de travail sortent ensemble.
- Vous et moi, nous parlons toute la journée!

Attention! Quand il y a deux sujets, on doit trouver le pronom sujet logique.

RÉFÉRENCES : l'accord du verbe, p. 165

L'impératif

Regarde les phrases suivantes tirées du texte *Le client difficile*.

- Regardez notre menu!
- Finissons cette conversation!
- Attendez!

On utilise l'impératif pour donner un ordre ou pour faire une suggestion. À l'impératif, il y a seulement trois formes : tu, nous et vous. On écrit seulement le verbe.

regarde*	finis	attends
regardons	finissons	attendons
regardez	finissez	attendez

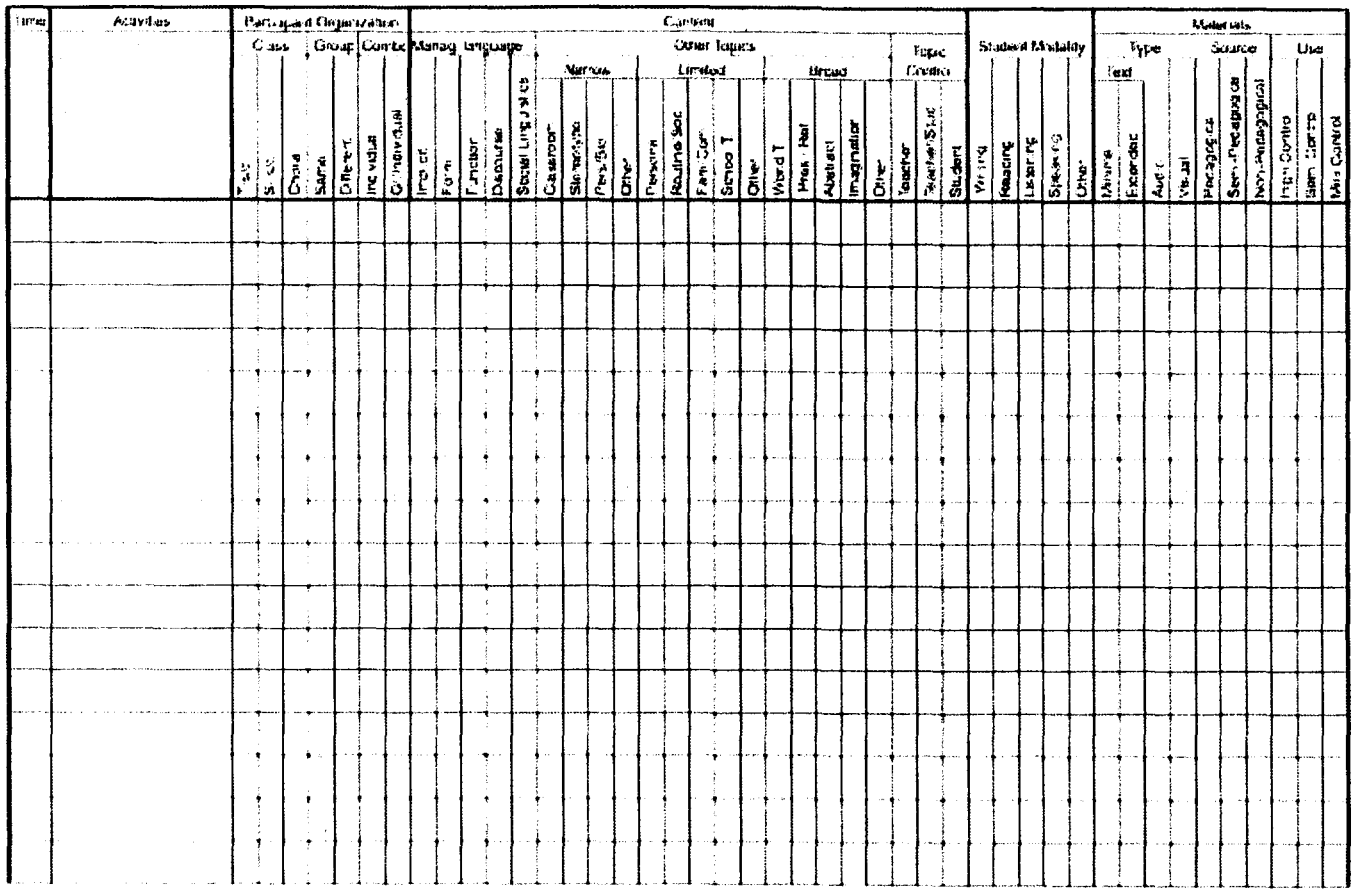
* Attention : Pour les verbes en *-er*, on enlève le *s* final de la forme *tu*.

RÉFÉRENCES : l'impératif, p. 161

13

Anderson, D., Chemeris, P., Edgar, K., Masschaele, D., & Salvatori, M. (2001). *On y va*. Toronto: Addison-Wesley.

COLT Checklist Part A Date _____ Lesson (minutes) _____



Frohlich, M., Spada, N., Allen, P. (1985). Differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(1) 27-57.

Appendix G: Code List

Adjectival agreement with nouns (Gr. 5)

Adverbial expressions

Adverbs (Gr. 6)

Conjunctions (Gr. 6)

Definite article agreement (Gr. 4)

Demonstrative determiners (Gr. 7)

Double verb constructions (Gr. 7)

Expressions of quantity (Gr. 6)

Expressions with *avoir* (Gr. 5)

Expressions with *en*

Grammatical spelling: accents

Grammatical spelling: contractions preceding vowels

Grammatical spelling: contractions with prepositions (Gr. 7)

Inappropriate word

Indefinite article agreement (Gr. 4)

Irregular adjectives (Gr. 7)

Missing words

Modal verbs *vouloir, pouvoir, devoir* (Gr. 7)

Negation (Gr. 5)

Noun agreement (Gr. 4)

Partitive article agreement with nouns (Gr. 6)

Possessive determiners (Gr. 6)

Prepositions of place (Gr. 4)

Preposition *de* for possession (Gr. 4)

Present tense of *aller* (singular and plural) (Gr. 6)

Present tense of *avoir* (singular) (Gr. 4)

Present tense of *er* verbs (singular) (Gr. 4)

Present tense of *er* verbs (plural) (Gr. 5)

Present tense of *être* (Gr. 4-5)

Present tense of *faire* (singular) (Gr. 6)

Present tense of irregular *ir* and *re* verbs (Gr. 6)

Question words (Gr. 5)

Spelling

Subject pronouns (Gr. 4)

Verb agreement with compound subjects (Gr. 7)

Appendix H: Carol's Story

Pâques Chien

Voici L'histoire d'une chien que veux la pâques lapin. La chien a jaloux de la pâques lapin, pourquoi la lapin done la bonbon à garcon et filles et fait leur heureax.

Alor la chien s'habille en comme la pâques lapin. La chien saute à le maison de garcon et filles. Avec a panier de bonbon, Alor son pas pâques dimanche! Tout le garçon et filles rire en pâques chein. La chien est vrai triste.

Le jour suivant le chien va à pâques lapin, et parle à lapin. Il dit: "Pâques lapin, je veux à etre la pàques chien" La Pâques lapin dit: "Alor, tu ne peux pas pourqoi, tu es allergie de bonbon!" La chien pense, puit did "Tu es droit!" La chien rèalize qui il beaucoup quelque etre un chien.

Alor, la chien va la garcon et filles. La chien rèalize qui la garcon et filles aime la chien juste la route il est. Alor, chacune pâques dimanche, la chein aide la pâques lapin livre la bonbon à maison de la chien.

Appendix I: Barry's Story

Comment y aller ?

Apres, Marie parle avec le mere de Pierre elle marche et marche. tout a coup elle voit un singe. Marie et le singe parle . Tout a coup le singe court et court .Marie a tre, tre triste.Elle marche et marche elle voit un elephant. Marie et le elephant parle. Tout a coup le elephant marche et marche mais il tombe dans un lac. Marie marche et marche elle voit un auto. Marie conduit le auto. Elle sauté le auto surdessus le edifice de empire state. Mais le singe change a la King Kong et il sauté a la auto de Marie. Tout a coup le auto retombees de la ciel. Marie et king kong parle. King Kong veut sauter dehors de le auto. Quand King kong sauté dehors de le auto, le auto lancer en hant dan la ciel. Marie pance et pance. Tout a coup elle tombe dehors la ciel. Quand elle tombe dehors le auto le elephant court et court. Le elephant court sur marie et marie n' voit pas.

Appendix J: Avery's Story

Super-Fred

Le géant grenouille qui s'apple Super-Fred. Super-Fred habite dans l'eau. Il protège le humain parse-que le géant mouché manger les humain. Le géant mouche qui s'apple Jordan. Un jour, Jordan va à New York et il regarde pour les humain qui manger. L'humain à peur. Tout-a-coupe, Super-Fred saute au pentagone et voit Jordan, à langue, mais Jordan volé en haut. Super-fred court après Jordan. Jordan volé dans la poubelle et nagé dans les ordures. Super-Fred cherché pour Jordan mais, il ne trouve pas lui. Pendant Super-Fred cherché pour Jordan, il mange les ordures. Il pense-que il au paradis. Quand il est dans la poubelle il pense-qu'il est aidé l'humain par manger l'humain mais Super-Fred pense-que Jordan est très, très méchant. Tout-a-coupe Jordan saute de la poubelle et voler. Super-Fred saute de Jordan et manger lui. Puis, Super-Fred va à l'école. Dans l'école sais une géant oie, le géant oie sais l'amie de Jordan. Le géant oie qui s'apple Kevin. Kevin à un couteau. Super-Fred saute très haut mais Kevin volé et Super-Fred tombe. Il pense-que il cassé la jambe. Super-Fred s'assoit sur le

pepeteré et dorment. Il s'assoit sur le tableau et dorment. Pendant Super-Fred dormer Kevin coupé il avec sa couteau et aidé Jordan. Jordan et Kevin court très loin au Ontario. Quand Super-Fred s'levé il à faim Super-Fred visiter l'hôpital et il jambe ne cassé pas.

Appendix K: Carol's Homework Assignment

1. Est-ce qu'il y a six ou sept personnages dans la pièce ?

   Il y a six personnages dans la peice.

2. Est-ce que Pierre est l'ami ou le frère de Marie ?

   Pierre est l'ami de Marie.

3. Est-ce que Pierre habite près de ou loin de Marie ?

   Pierre habite près de loin.

4. Est-ce que Marie habite à Paris ou à Québec ?

   Marie habite à Quebec.

5. Est-ce que Pierre ou Marie est le premier personnage qui parle dans la pièce ?

   Marie est le premier personnage qui parle dans la pièce..

6. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ou il n'est pas vrai que Marie habite à Québec ?

   Il est vrai que Marie habite à Quèbec.

7. Est-ce que Marie veut aller voir Pierre ou travailler avec Pierre ?

   Marie veut aller voir Pierre.

8. Est-ce que Marie est une fille ou un garçon ?

   Marie est une fille.

9. Après que Marie pense un peu à son problème, est-ce qu'elle décide d'aller à Paris en avion ou à pied ?

Marie pense un peu à son problème, elle dècide d'aller à paris en avion.

10. Après que Marie commence à marcher, est-ce qu'elle voit quelqu'un qui casse une auto ou conduit une auto ?

    Marie commence à marcher elle voit quelqu'un qui casse un auto.

11. Quand Marie voit la policière, est-ce que Marie traverse la rue ou danse dans la rue ?

    Marie voit la policière, Marie traverse la rue..

12. Si Marie veut aller à Paris en auto avec la policière, est-ce qu'elle doit jouer avec la policière ou parler avec la policière ?

    Marie veut aller à Paris est-ce avec la policere..

13. Pour parler avec la policière, est-ce que Marie traverse la rue ou traverse l'école.

    Marie traverse la rue.

14. Est-ce que Marie dit qu'elle est perdue ou fatiguée à la policière ?

    Marie dit qu'elle fatiguée à la policière.

15. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ou il n'est pas vrai que la policière aide Marie ?

    Il vrai que la policière aide Marie.

16. Est-ce que Marie monte dans l'auto ou dans le train avec la policière.

    Marie monte dans l'auto ou dans avec la policière.

17. Est-ce que l'auto s'arrête parce que la policière est perdue ou parce que l'auto ne marche pas ?

L'auto s'arrête parce que la policiere est perdue.

18. Après que l'auto s'arrête, est-ce que la policière dit qu'elle est surprise ou désolée ?

Oui, la policière *dit qu'elle est désolée.*

Appendix L: Barry's Homework Assignment

1. Est-ce qu'il y a six ou sept personnages dans la pièce ?

   Il y a six personnages dans la pièce.

2. Est-ce que Pierre est l'ami ou le frère de Marie ?

   Pierre est l'ami de Marie.

3. Est-ce que Pierre habite près de ou loin de Marie ?

   Pierre habite loin de Marie.

4. Est-ce que Marie habite à Paris ou à Québec ?

   Marie habite à Quebec.

5. Est-ce que Pierre ou Marie est le premier personnage qui parle dans la pièce ?

   Marie est le prenier personnnage qui parle.

6. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ou il n'est pas vrai que Marie habite à Québec ?

   Est vrai que Marie habite à Quebec.

7. Est-ce que Marie veut aller voir Pierre ou travailler avec Pierre ?

   Marie veut aller voir avec Pierre.

8. Est-ce que Marie et une fille ou un garçon ?

   Marie une fille.

9. Après que Marie pense un peu à son problème, est-ce qu'elle décide d'aller à Paris en avion ou à pied ?

Marie pense elle march sa pieds..

10. Après que Marie commence à marcher, est-ce qu'elle voit quelqu'un qui casse une auto ou conduit une auto ?

    Après que Marie commence à Marche, elle voit quelqu'un conduit une auto.

11. Quand Marie voit la policière, est-ce que Marie traverse la rue ou danse dans la rue ?

    Marie traverse la rue quand elle voit la policière.

12. Si Marie veut aller à Paris en auto avec la policière, est-ce qu'elle doit jouer avec la policière ou parler avec la policière ?

    Si marie veut aller à Paris en auto elle parler avec la policière.

13. Pour parler avec la policière, est-ce que Marie traverse la rue ou traverse l'école.

    Marie traverse la rue.

14. Est-ce que Marie dit qu'elle est perdue ou fatiguée à la policière ?

    Marie dit il fatiguèe à la policière.

15. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ou il n'est pas vrai que la policière aide Marie ?

    Marie est vrai a la policière.

16. Est-ce que Marie monte dans l'auto ou dans le train avec la policière.

Marie monte dans l'auto avec la policière.

17. Est-ce que l'auto s'arrête parce que la policière est perdue ou parce que l'auto ne marche pas ?

L'auto s'arrête parce que l'auto ne marche pas.

18. Après que l'auto s'arrête, est-ce que la policière dit qu'elle est surprise ou désolée ?

La policière dit qu'elle est desolèe.

Appendix M: Avery's Homework Assignment

Comment y Aller?

1. Est-ce qu'il y a six ou sept personnages dans la pièce ?

   Il y a six personnages dans la pièce.

2. Est-ce que Pierre est l'ami ou le frère de Marie ?

   Pierre est l'ami de Marie.

3. Est-ce que Pierre habite près de ou loin de Marie ?

   Pierre habite loin de Marie.

4. Est-ce que Marie habite à Paris ou à Québec ?

   Marie habite au Québec.

5. Est-ce que Pierre ou Marie est le premier personnage qui parle dans la pièce ?

   Marie est le premier personnage qui parle dans la piéce.

6. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ou il n'est pas vrai que Marie habite à Québec ?

   Il n'est pas vrai que Marie habite à Québec.

7. Est-ce que Marie veut aller voir Pierre ou travailler avec Pierre ?

   Marie veut aller voir Pierre.

8. Est-ce que Marie et une fille ou un garçon ?

   Marie est une fille.

9. Après que Marie pense un peu à son problème, est-ce qu'elle décide d'aller à Paris en avion ou à pied ?

Marie pense un peu à son problème, elle decide d'aller à Paris à pied.

10. Après que Marie commence à marcher, est-ce qu'elle voit quelqu'un qui casse une auto ou conduit une auto ?

Marie voit quelqu'un auto apres que elle commence a marcher.

11. Quand Marie voit la policière, est-ce que Marie traverse la rue ou danse dans la rue ?
Elle traverse la rue.

12. Si Marie veut aller à Paris en auto avec la policière, est-ce qu'elle doit jouer avec la policière ou parler avec la policière ?

Marie parle avec la policière.

13. Pour parler avec la policière, est-ce que Marie traverse la rue ou traverse l'école.

Marie parle avec la policière est traverse la rue.

14. Est-ce que Marie dit qu'elle est perdue ou fatiguée à la policière ?

Marie dit elle est fatiguée à la policière.

15. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ou il n'est pas vrai que la policière aide Marie ?

Marie *n'est pas vrai que la policière aide Marie.*

16. Est-ce que Marie monte dans l'auto ou dans le train avec la policière.

Marie monte dans l'auto avec la policière.

17. Est-ce que l'auto s'arrête parce que la policière est perdue ou parce que l'auto ne marche pas ?

L'auto ne marche pas.

18. Après que l'auto s'arrête, est-ce que la policière dit qu'elle est surprise ou desolée ?

Il dit il est desolée.

Appendix M: Ethics Approval

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Western USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number:	0708-3
Applicant:	Amanda Joubert
Supervisor:	Shelley Taylor
Title:	*An investigation into the acquisition of French grammar understanding through the accelerative integrated method.*
Expiry Date:	December 31, 2007
Type:	MEd Thesis
Ethics Approval Date:	September 11, 2007
Revision #:	
Documents Reviewed & Approved:	UWO Protocol, Letter of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

No deviations from, or changes to, the research project as described in this protocol may be initiated without prior written approval, except for minor administrative aspects. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information and consent documentation, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2007-2008 Faculty of Education Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Dr. Alan Edmunds	**Faculty (Chair 2007)**
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	**Faculty**
Dr. Jacqueline Specht	**Faculty**
Dr. Wayne Martino	**Faculty**
Dr. J. Marshall Mangan	**Faculty**
Dr. Jason Brown	**Faculty**
Dr. Robert Macmillan	**Assoc Dean, Graduate Programs & Research** (*ex officio*)
Dr. Jerry Paquette	**UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board** (*ex officio*)

The Faculty of Education
1137 Western Rd
London, ON N6G 1G7

Karen Kueneman, Research Officer
Room 1111, Faculty of Education Building
[redacted]
519 661 2111

cc: Chair, Sub-Committee on Research Ethics

Appendix 0: Consent Forms

An Investigation into the Acquisition of French Grammar Understanding Through the Accelerative Integrated Method

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

My name is Amanda Joubert and I am currently enrolled in a Master's of Education program at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into grammar acquisition in core French classes using the *Accelerative Integrated Method* and would like to invite your school to participate in this study.

The aim of this study is to investigate the potential of the *Accelerative Integrated Method* to teach grammatical elements of the French language. In particular, I want to investigate this method's capacity to teach students grammar in written contexts. I hope to learn more about this method's strengths and limitations as a vehicle for teaching core French.

I am requesting that you allow me to observe in the grade 6 classroom during French class. I will take note of events happening in class using a checklist and will use these notes to help me understand the classroom environment that students work in. I will observe three French class sessions. In addition, I will ask for photocopies of two pieces of written homework from 3 students, which I will study in detail to see the types of grammatical points they have learned since beginning to study French.
I expect that the classroom observations will take place over

about 2 weeks. The written work will be completed throughout a month.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your school name nor information which could identify your teachers or your students will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. No names will appear in my checklist observations. Five years after my research is complete, I will destroy all the data. Until then, I will keep it locked in a secure location.

There are no known risks to participating in this study, but it may increase your teachers' and students' interest in second language learning.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Students and teachers may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on their future or academic status.

An Investigation into the Acquisition of French Grammar Understanding Through the Accelerative Integrated Method

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO TEACHERS

My name is Amanda Joubert and I am currently enrolled in a Master's of Education program at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into grammar acquisition in core French classes using the Accelerative Integrated Method and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The aim of this study is to investigate the potential of the Accelerative Integrated Method to teach grammatical elements of the French language. In particular, I want to investigate this method's capacity to teach students grammar in written contexts. I hope to learn more about this method's strengths and limitations as a vehicle for teaching core French.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to allow me to observe in your classroom during French class. I will take note of events happening in class using a checklist and will use these notes to help me understand the classroom environment that you work in. I will observe three different French classes. In addition, I may ask for photocopies of two pieces of your students' written homework, which I will study in detail to see the types of grammatical points they have learned since beginning to study French.

I expect that the classroom observations will take place over about 2 weeks. The written work will be completed throughout a month.

throughout a month.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. No names will appear in my checklist observations. Five years after my research is complete, I will destroy all the data. Until then, I will keep it locked in a secure location.

There are no known risks to participating in this study, but it may make your students more interested in learning about second language acquisition.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research subject you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Amanda Joubert or Dr. Shelley Taylor.

An Investigation into the Acquisition of French Grammar Understanding Through the Accelerative Integrated Method

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO PARENTS

My name is Amanda Joubert and I am currently enrolled in a Master's of Education program at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into grammar acquisition in core French classes using the *Accelerative Integrated Method* and would like to invite your child to participate in this study.

The aim of this study is to investigate the potential of the *Accelerative Integrated Method* to teach grammatical elements of the French language. In particular, I want to investigate this method's capacity to teach students grammar in written contexts. I hope to learn more about this method's strengths and limitations as a vehicle for teaching core French.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study you will be asked to allow me to observe him/her in the grade seven classroom during French class. I will take note of events happening in class using a checklist and will use these notes to help me understand the classroom environment that the students work in. I will observe three different French classes, In addition, I may ask for photocopies of two pieces of your child's written homework, which I will study in detail to see the types of grammatical points (s)he has learned since beginning to study French.

I expect that the classroom observations will take place over about 2 weeks. The written work will be completed

about 2 weeks. The written work will be completed throughout a month.
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your child's name nor information which could identify him/her will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. No names will appear in my checklist observations. Five years after my research is complete, I will destroy all the data. Until then, I will keep it locked in a filing cabinet.

There are no known risks to participating in this study, but it may increase your child's interest in learning French and other languages.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate; your child may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your child's academic status. If any members of the class choose not to participate, the study will not take place in your child's classroom. Collection of your child's homework is an optional part of this study. You will be asked on the consent form whether or not you agree to this part of the study.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your child's rights as a research subject you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Amanda Joubert or Dr. Shelley Taylor.

If you would like to allow your child to participate, please fill in the consent form and return to your child's classroom teacher.

An Investigation into the Acquisition of French Grammar Understanding Through the Accelerative Integrated Method

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please choose one option:
_____Copies of my child's homework may be used in this research.
_____Copies of my child's homework may NOT be used in this research.

Research participant:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Legally authorized representative:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____