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The acquisition of four adverbs in a learner corpus of L2 French

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1. Introduction

- 1 This study investigates the acquisition and use of adverbs in the spontaneous speech by Swedish learners of L2 French. We focus our analysis on four adverbs: *vraiment*, *peut-être*, *aussi* and *seulement* (*really*, *perhaps*, *too/also*, *only*), which are all non-obligatory elements in the utterance structure. Their use can affect other constituents by modifying the propositional content (*vraiment*, *peut-être*) or including/excluding alternatives to the propositional content (*aussi*, *seulement*). In this way, they seem to correspond to the central communicative needs as enhancement/addition and moderation/restriction; *vraiment* and *aussi* function as intensifiers, *peut-être* and *seulement* as mitigators of linguistic constituents. With the exception of *seulement* they are also frequent adverbs in native speech production (Bilger, 2004; Chanet, 2004; Hancock, 2007; Sanell, 2007).
- 2 The analysis focuses on the relation between the use of the adverbs (placement and function) and developmental routes as defined by Bartning and Schlyter (2004, see section 4.2 below), and Klein and Perdue (1997, for *basic varieties*). A number of adverbs that can appear in multiple positions change their meaning or function following their position in the sentence (*cf. inter alia* Schlyter, 1977: 239). We will illustrate the development of syntactic placement and discourse functions at different levels of acquisition. We pose the question whether an order of acquisition can be inferred from our data. In particular we aim to describe late L2 discourse use of these adverbs. Syntactically, they differ with respect to their placement during the course of acquisition: while *aussi* and *seulement* move into the utterance from peripheral positions, left dissociation seem to be a late feature of *vraiment* and *peut-être* (Benazzo, 2000, 2005; Sanell, 2007; Hancock, 2007). Given the hypothesis that the use of these adverbs develops throughout acquisitional stages, we expect to find an increasing number of functions as learners progress through the stages. Although the focus of our analysis is on the very

advanced stages, all acquisitional levels are included in the study for comparison. Stages 1-3 are contrasted with more advanced stages and we make a fine-grained analysis of advanced stages beyond stage 4 which is the advanced low stage. The acquisitional stages defined by Bartning and Schlyter (2004) are presented below. With the group of “near-native” informants we hope to demonstrate advanced pragmatic/discourse functions and thus contribute to the knowledge on late features in SLA. To our knowledge there are thus far no studies on French L2 use of adverbs that cover learner productions from beginners to “near-native” level.

2. Previous studies

- 3 The studying of adverbs has interested a large number of researchers with different approaches. Along with the investigation of different adverbs in native production, there is also a range of studies examining adverbs in L2, and some comprising both L1 and L2 such as Cinque (1999) and Schlyter (2005). The latter argues that, while the L1 learner develops his/her use of different adverbs over time, the L2 learner has access to all adverbs from the beginning. However, with the exception of *peut-être*, the adverbs of our study are not included in these two studies. The present review of previous studies focuses on the adverbs relevant to this study starting with corpus studies of form/function frequencies in native production (Bilger, 2004; Chanet, 2004). Pragmatic functions of adverbs in L1 have been studied by Nølke (1983) and König (1991) among others, and in L2 by *inter alia* Watorek and Perdue (1999), Dimroth and Watorek (2000) and Benazzo (2000).
- 4 Bilger’s (2004) study of French *-ment* adverbs shows that *vraiment* is by far the most frequent adverb in the oral corpus she investigates (Corpus de référence de français parlé, CRFP). It is three times more frequent than the second most common *-ment* adverb (16 occurrences/10 000 words in the sub-corpus “Parole Privée” of CRPF). In contrast, *Seulement* does not even appear among the 10 most frequent adverbs *-ment* adverbs. In the same article, Bilger observes that *vraiment* seems to be a highly multifunctional adverb, modifying adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns. Among the three possible syntactical positions, before, after or in the verbal construction, the latter is by far the most common in CRFP.
- 5 Chanet (2004) treats the methodological and theoretical difficulties with tracing and categorizing discourse markers in a corpus. Their form is certainly not sufficient for categorizing since they take on different functions in discourse. Among the adverbs that may function as discourse markers are, among others, *aussi*, *seulement* and *vraiment*. *Aussi* appears to be about 10 times more frequent than *seulement* in CORPAIX and CRFP (see Table 3, Appendix). We will thus regard these adverbs as potential discourse markers, and their pragmaticalization (= pragmatic development) in the learner language should in some way be a process parallel to the development of syntactical/morphological features.
- 6 The pragmatic function of various adverbs has been described by Nølke (1983) who analyzes adverbs that relate to other constituents in the phrase as well as to the context, thus functioning as focus particles (adverbes paradigmatisants) like *même*, *aussi*, *surtout*, *seulement* among others (*even*, *also*, *especially*, *only*). The author shows that these adverbs cannot be separated from the focalized constituent without completely changing the meaning of the utterance. Nølke’s study (1983) does not address acquisitional aspects.

- 7 However, there are also a number of studies of adverbs in SLA. Dimroth and Watorek (2000) investigate the use and syntactic placement of additive particles in the basic variety (Klein, Perdue, 1997). Their results could not confirm the hypothesis that the additive particle would preferably be placed in an initial position. In a comparative cross-sectional study Watorek and Perdue (1999) propose a three level analysis: syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. On the pragmatic level, the authors show that the additive particle is used to insure coherence: « *dans cette 3^{ème} rue il y a des rails de tramway, il y aussi trois voitures* » (in this third street there are tramway rails, there are also three cars) (1999, p. 304). The authors also observe that the learners' utterances tend to be more "iconic" than those of native speakers in the sense that learners structure their utterances more transparently than natives. In L2 production, the particle is often placed next to the constituent with which it associates, whereas the native speaker prefers a nonadjacent position (*idem*, p. 309). The emergence of focus adverbs in L2 French, English and German has been analyzed by Benazzo (2000). She examines *inter alia* the structural integration in the utterance and discursive functions of *also*, *only*, *still/yet* and *already* and their equivalents in French and German. Her results show that the additive (also etc.) and restrictive particles (*only* etc.) appear prior to the others due to the discursive functions that these adverbs possess. Benazzo suggests that the learners use them to establish an anaphoric bond with a preceding statement.
- 8 In summary, these studies have shown that the adverbs of our study are frequent in L1 production (with the exception of *seulement*), multifunctional and may function as discourse markers. Whereas the most common syntactic position of the adverbs in L1 is in the verbal phrase, beginner L2 speakers place them adjacent to the constituent they affect (*moi seulement*, only me). These studies also show that the adverbs are used in pragmatic functions in L2 production. Consequently, in this study we will follow both syntactic and pragmatic development of the adverbs in L2 while focusing on the advanced learners' production. The aspects of *focus* and *scope* will not be taken into account in this study.

3. Corpus

- 9 In this empirical study we draw on extensive data: 75 000 words and 33 informants from a Swedish learner corpus of French as a foreign language, the *InterFra* corpus (Bartning, 2009). Table 1 presents the *InterFra* corpus which contains approximately 500 000 words. The interviews are around 15 minutes long and are led by a native French speaker. They are conducted in a semi-formal way and follow a pre-established set of topics such as family, hobbies, travels, studies, films, future etc.

Table 1. The *InterFra* corpus

	Long/ Cross	No of inform.	Years of study	Age	Time of study	No of record- ings	Type of learner
NNS							
Beginners	a) long b) cross	a) 6-10 b) 18	0	19-30	2 terms	5-10 1	formal
Sec. school	a) long b) cross	a) 13 b) 20	3,5	16-18	2 years	2 1	formal
Univ. stud.	a) long b) cross	a) 6-8 b) 18	4,5 – 6	19-26	4-5 terms	10 1	semi- formal
Fut teachers	Long	6	7-8	23-34	2 terms. +stage	4	semi- formal
Doc.stud.	Cross	9	8-9	23-26	-	1	semi- formal
NS	-	20	-	23-26	-	-	

NNS=non-native speaker, NS=native speaker; Long=longitudinal; Cross=cross-sectional; Beg.=true beginners at university, Sec.school=Secondary school students; Univ. stud.=university students, 1st to 4th term, Fut.teachers=future teachers, Doc.stud=Post graduate students.

- 10 The informants in the beginner group and the group of secondary school students are formal learners while the university students, future teachers and doctoral students are considered semi-formal. The corpus also comprises native speakers' production. A group of "near-native" speakers was recorded later. These recordings follow the same principles as those of *InterFra* (cf. Bartning, 2009). The informants in this latter group were interviewed in France, however, where they have lived for 20-30 years. Although we do not yet have formal criteria for classifying the level of acquisition of the informants in this later corpus, this group will be referred to as "near-natives" below.
- 11 In this study we examine six different speaker groups including the control group of native speakers. The speaker groups were categorized by acquisitional stages proposed by Bartning and Schlyter (2004): beginners (stages 1-3), university students, future teachers, doctoral students (stages 4-6) and the above mentioned group of "near-native" speakers, altogether representing seven different levels of learner varieties (see Table 2 below). In total we have analyzed 40 interviews distributed as follows:

Table 2. Corpus of this study

Level of acquisition	No of in- formants	No of interviews	No of words
Stages 1-3	8	15	9 951
Stage 4	5	5	7 437
Stage 5	5	5	12 040
Stage 6	5	5	10 411
"Near-natives"	5	5	18 219
Native speakers	5	5	15 213
<i>Total</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>73 271</i>

4. Procedure

4.1 Theoretical framework

- 12 Adverbs can either interact with different constituents of the sentence in which they occur, thus referred to as *focus particles* (König, 1991), or relate to the entire sentence or utterance. An utterance is part of the information structure which serves to introduce, maintain or develop information in a specific context (cf. Watorek, Perdue, 1999). In spontaneous oral production, it is often necessary to look at the context beyond sentence boundaries or a single utterance (cf. Halliday, Mathiessen, 2003). For the determination of the different functions of the adverbs in this study, we therefore also take into consideration a wider context in which the adverb is produced. A model that suits our purposes and takes into account both information structure and discourse components as phrasal adverbs is that of Morel and Danon-Boileau (1998). The model was conceived for interactional talk, which also fits the corpus of the present study.
- 13 The adverbs in this study all belong to a group of adverbs that often have a fixed position in the VP between the finite and non-finite verb (Pedersen *et al.*, 1981: 74). However, certain phrasal adverbs can be placed in initial position: « *pourtant, je dois faire vite* » and « *Malheureusement, le ciel restait couvert* », or in final position at the end of the utterance: « *je dois faire vite pourtant* » (Pedersen *et al.*, 1981: 75). The different possible positions of the adverbs are shown below in a modified model from Pedersen *et al.* (1981) following Diderichsen (1974) (Figure 1). The modifications added to this model are marked in grey and have their source in a model presented by Lindström (2002) for the topological structure of an extended clause in Swedish¹.

Figure 1. Syntactic model from Pedersen *et al.* (1981) including our modifications

Extended clause										
Pre - front field (I)	Inner clause/Rheme (II)									Post-end field (III)
	Front field	Verbal field/Middle field							End field	
adverb	NP	finite verb	adverb	neg.	adverb	non-finite verb	adverb	non-finite verb	NP/ adverb	adverb
<i>vrai-ment</i>	<i>Marie</i>	<i>n'a</i> <i>a</i>	<i>peut-être</i> <i>aussi</i> <i>vrai-ment</i>	<i>pas</i>	<i>seule-ment</i>			<i>mangé</i>	<i>la soupe</i> <i>aussi</i>	<i>vrai-ment</i>

- 14 In the analysis of syntactic positions we base our categorization of the data on this modified model for positions I, II and III (figure 1 and below). To these three positions we add another three (IV, V, VI) as an adaptation to spoken language. The following six positions are used for the analysis of syntactic placement of the adverbs. The first three positions are all related to a verbal phrase. The elliptic position (IV) is used primarily in nominal structures where there are only two possible positions for the adverb, namely before or after the constituent (*seulement anglais/anglais seulement*). The elliptic position is also found with prepositional phrases (*vraiment au hasard*) and with infinitives (

seulement rester). In (V) the adverb is itself an autonomous rheme² and has in this case an independent intonation.

Syntactic positions

I. Initial position (pre-front field)

vraiment j'ai eu des surprises (Cam, "near-native")
 Ou *peut-être* c'est pas toutes (Yvo, Sta 4)
 mais *aussi* l'histoire de la France (Mar, Sta 4)

II. Integrated position (in the inner clause/rheme)

elle a *vraiment* voulu s'impliquer (Cor, "near-native")
 et donc c'est plus intéressant pour eux *peut-être* de voir comment on apprend
 le français (Ida, Sta 6)
 j'ai *aussi* pensé à habiter avec un ami (Pel, Sta 2)
 C'est *seulement* un appartement avec un pièce (Car, Sta 2)

III. Final position (end field/post-end field)³

Finistère il a fait très beau *vraiment* (And, Sta 5)
 le plus difficile pour moi en cette période de l'année c'est le manque de soleil
peut-être (Hen, NS)
 on a un bateau *aussi* (Siv, Sta 3)

IV. Elliptic position (adv X / X adv)

donc *vraiment* au hasard (Mel, NS)
seulement / eh cinq *peut-être* (Eme, Sta 3)
 hiver *aussi* (Jan, Sta 1)

V. « Autonomous » rheme :

oui *vraiment*. pas *vraiment*. *vraiment*.
peut-être. oui *peut-être*. [independent intonation]

VI. Incomplete (syntactically not completed utterances)

ce qu'on fait pendant les cours de grammaire ici c'est *vraiment* c'est #

- 15 For this study we analyze the syntactic positions of the adverbs as well as their pragmatic and discourse functions from a functionalist perspective (Mitchell, Myles, 2004; Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005). We use a form-function analysis to account not only for what adverbs the informants have at their disposal at different stages of acquisition but also how they use these adverbs to communicate (cf. Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005: 113). For additional discourse aspects, we apply the framework of Morel and Danon-Boileau, where informational structure and intonation are taken into account (Morel, Danon-Boileau, 1998). This latter framework is compatible with the syntactic model chosen (Figure 1). The *inner clause* of our syntactic model corresponds to the rheme (*rhème*) in Morel's model, and the *post-end field* is called *postrhème* (*post-rhème*) by Morel, Danon-Boileau (1998). Morel's model is based in part on prosodic criteria, and the *post-rhème* has the typical low pitch intonation (marked by °x°)⁴. In section 5.2, where we address the functional aspects, we will refer to Morel's terminology in some instances (section 5.2 IV and 5.3).

- 16 The categorization of different discourse functions of these adverbs will be presented together with the results below.

4.2. Acquisitional stages

- 17 Even though the focus of interest in this study is the production at advanced stages, early stages are included in our analysis in order to shed light on specific features in the production at late stages. The study is considered cross-sectional. We use one interview (or in some cases two) per informant. The chosen interviews have been categorized by acquisitional stages, where we apply the six-stage continuum model that was proposed by Bartning and Schlyter (2004) for the acquisition of French L2 by Swedish-speaking students. Based on two longitudinal corpora with both formal or semi-formal and formal Swedish-speaking learners of oral spontaneous speech in approximately 80 recordings, these stages draw on developmental sequences of 20-25 mainly morpho-syntactic features but also include discourse features. The developmental sequences comprise six stages: 1. initial stage, 2. post-initial stage, 3. intermediate stage, 4. advanced low stage, 5. advanced medium stage, and 6. advanced high stage (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004). The “near-native” stage consists of informants from the *Paris corpus* which is an addition to the *InterFra*-corpus. The new corpus comprises oral production by 10 Swedish adults who have lived in France for 15-30 years. In the following a selection of features for each stage is presented (cf. Bartning, 2009) for a more detailed presentation of the proposed stages).
- 18 Stage 1, the initial stage, consists of nominal utterance structure, bare nouns but also some determiners, non-finite verbs forms (*je faire*) but also some finite and formulaic utterances such as *je voudrais, je m'appelle*.
- 19 Stage 2, the post-initial stage, contains polyfunctional ‘base’ forms (the present for past etc), some inflexion on verbs and adjectives, and the emergence of some subordination (*parce que*). The *imparfait* of *être*, *avoir* appears as well as the opposition 1st/2nd person on verbs of present but not yet the forms *nous V-ons*.
- 20 At stage 3, the intermediate stage, production becomes more systematic and regular. It contains present tense, le *passé composé* and the future, mostly periphrastic future. The non-finite form *je donnE* still subsists although it is less frequent. Subordinate clauses (causal, relative, interrogative and temporal) develop further.
- 21 At stage 4, the advanced low stage, non-finite forms disappear except some *je *lire, je *rire*, the use of the *conditionnel*, the *plus-que-parfait* and the subjunctive emerge. These more complex forms still appear in mainly non-complex syntax. There is also a significant overuse of *mais* and *parce que* (Hancock, 2000).
- 22 Stage 5, is the advanced medium stage. At this stage inflectional morphology becomes functional. There is a productive use of *conditionnel*, *plus-que-parfait* and the subjunctive (Bartning, 2009). Nominal morphology still causes some problem. There is elaborate macro-syntactic use of *parce que* in complex utterances (Hancock, 2000) and an increase of multi-propositional subordination.
- 23 Stage 6, the advanced high stage, contains the stabilising of inflectional morphology even in multi-propositional utterances and productive use of the subjunctive (Bartning, 2009). There is native use of the connectors *enfin* and *donc* (Hancock, 2000), of relative clauses and of causal connectors and clauses.

5. Results

- 24 Each adverb is analyzed in relation to its syntactic position (Positional analysis) as well as its various functions (Functional analysis) across the stages. In the positional analysis the number of tokens is given for each adverb at each stage of acquisition (see also syntheses of the number of tokens, Table 2 in Appendix). The frequency of each position was calculated in percent within each stage (Figures 2-5).

5.1. Positional analysis

5.1.1. Aussi

Table 3. Syntactic positions of *aussi*

Aussi	Syntactic positions						Total
	init	inte	fin	ellip	auton	inc	
Sta 1			1	4			5
Sta 2	2	5	6	4			17
Sta 3	1	6	12	7			26
Sta 4	5	12	9	12	3		41
Sta 5	13	14	20	3	1		51
Sta 6	10	9	20	1			40
“near-native”	4	24	44				72
Native	6	18	8		1		33
Total	41	88	120	31	5	0	285

Init: Initial, inte: integrated, fin: final, ellip: elliptic, auton: autonomous, inc: incomplete etc. Sta: acquisitional stages (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004)

- 25 As the above table shows *aussi* appears at stage 1. It is then placed either in an elliptic position following the constituent it relates to, as illustrated in example [1], or in the final position of the utterance adjacent to the focalized constituent as in [2]. As example [1] shows, the utterance consists of only two words which leaves only two possible positions, viz. before or after the concerned constituent. These positions are also found at stages 2, 3 and 4. However, as the utterances become longer, the additive particle is placed preferentially at the end (final position) as in [2], or integrated in the *rhematic* part of the utterance [3]⁵.

[1] I: l'hiver . le mois de décembre le mois de janvier tu fais du cheval aussi ?

E: l'hiver ?

I: hiver . + hiver

E: ah SIM hiver . eh oui . hiver / + aussi (Jan, sta 1)

[2] I: oui . tu: # c'est le premier livre en français que tu lis ?

E: non ah ouais je j'ai lu « Maigret et l'Indicateur » + aussi (Pel, sta 2)

[3] E: oui eh / mais j'a j'a aussi pensé à habiter avec un ami (I:mm) qui qui qui s'appelle Per ou Perre (I:mm) et ma meilleur ami (I:mm) mais mm nous avons <planer> ? (Pel, sta 2)

- 26 At stage 4 all positions are used. The distribution differs both from the preceding stages and the following with the highest number of tokens in the integrated or elliptic

positions. The analysis reveals that the initial position of *aussi* is the least common position at stages 1–4 as in [4].

[4] I: oui des films d'horreur ? + mhm

E: oui . SIM oui . oui . et aussi eh mm st eh eh thrill- thrill- (Car, sta 2)

- 27 The number of tokens of elliptic use is higher at stage 4 than at any other stage which could be explained by the fact that one informant alone produces six of the twelve occurrences.
- 28 With the exception of one token at stage 1, the autonomous position [5] is used from stage 4. There are however very few tokens altogether of *aussi* in this position.

[5] I: la Finlande ?

E: oui aussi (RIRE) aussi . (Chr, sta 4)

- 29 From stage 5 the number of occurrences of *aussi* in initial position increases. The final position is the most preferred, contrary to the native use in which the integrated position is the most frequent. The elliptic use becomes scarce. It is worth noticing that even the “near-native” informants prefer the final position to the initial or integrated positions. A comparison with a sample from a Swedish spoken corpus, *Samtal i Göteborg* (Conversations in Gothenburg)⁶ concerning the equivalent of *aussi* “också”, showed a clear preference for the final position (70 % of the tokens). Thus, we cannot exclude an influence from Swedish on this positional pattern.

Synthesis of positions of aussi

- 30 The analysis has shown that *aussi* is used at all levels of acquisition. Figure 2 below shows that the preferred position in the learner groups is either final or integrated in the utterance at stages 4–6 and “near-native”. In comparison to native use, the advanced learners use it more frequently. While the native speakers prefer to place it in the integrated position, the learners have a preference for the final position.

Figure 2. Distribution of syntactic positions of *aussi* (relative frequency/stage)

Number of tokens: Sta 1=5, sta 2=17, sta 3=26, sta 4=41, sta 5=51, sta 6=40, NN=72, NS=32.

5.1.2. Peut-être

Table 4. Distribution of syntactic positions of *peut-être* (tokens/stage)

Peut-être	Syntactic positions						Total
	init	inte	fin	ellip	auton	inc	
Sta 1					2		2
Sta 2	1				2		3
Sta 3	2	2		7	3		14
Sta 4	10	9		4	3	3	29
Sta 5	7	13		1	4		25
Sta 6	6	26	2	3	4	3	44
“near-native”	8	20		4		2	34
Native	5	26	2	3		1	37
Total	39	96	4	22	18	9	188

Init: Initial, inte: integrated, fin: final, ellip:elliptic, auton: autonomous, inc:incomplete Sta: acquisitional stages (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004)

- 31 The first appearance of *peut-être* is found at stage 1 where it is placed in the autonomous position in the production of two informants, as in [6].

[6] I: mais toi peut-être tu parles mieux maintenant ?

E: (RIRE) oui *peut-être* . (I:mm) non . (Car, sta 2)

- 32 At stage 2, there is one token of *peut-être* placed in the initial position, i.e. before the rheme. Altogether, there are few tokens of *peut-être* at stages 1 and 2, only six tokens produced by three (out of four) informants. At stage 3, however, all four of the

investigated informants use the adverb. There are 14 tokens altogether. At this stage the elliptic and the integrated positions also appear. The elliptic one, as shown in example [7], seems to be very productive at this stage, with a total of 7 tokens.

[7] euh non je / *seulement* / eh cinq *peut-être* (Eme, sta 3)

- 33 At stage 4, the initial position is the most important (10 tokens) together with the “integrated” position (9 tokens), and from this stage forward, these two positions will be clearly preferred. Interestingly, at this stage, the adverb in initial position is consistently used without the *que*-marking and is prosodically integrated with the rheme, as in example [8]:

[8] ou *peut-être* c’est pas toutes (Yvo, sta 4)

- 34 The positional pattern preferred by the native speakers is largely established at stage 5. The analysis show that the most important position in the native speakers’ production is the “integrated” one (13 tokens) as in example [9]. The second important position is initial position with 7 tokens as in [10].

[9] et donc euh: c’est plus intéressant pour eux *peut-être* de voir comment on apprend le français (Ida, sta 6)

[10] enfin bon *peut-être aussi* qu’on est entre étudiants et tout ça (Gaë, NS)

Synthesis of positions of peut-être

- 35 The first appearance of *peut-être* is found in autonomous position (stage 1). In initial position it is used first at stage 2. At stage 3, the integrated position first appears, together with the elliptic position. Ellipse seems to be an important strategy at stage 3. At stage 4, the two most frequent positions, the initial and the integrated positions, are equally frequent. The far most preferred position among the native speakers is the integrated and the second important is the initial. This latter positional preference pattern is clearly established at stage 5.

Figure 3. Distribution of syntactic positions of *peut-être* (relative frequency/stage)

Number of tokens: Sta 1=2, sta 2=3, sta 3=14, sta 4=29, sta 5=25, sta 6=44, NN=34, NS=37.

5.1.3 Seulement

- 36 As Table 5 below demonstrates, *seulement* is not used by learners at stage 1.

Table 5. Distribution of syntactic positions of *seulement* (tokens/stage)

Seulement	Syntactic positions						Total
	init	inte	fin	ellip	auton	inc	
Sta 1							0
Sta 2		2	1	5			8
Sta 3		4	3	6			13
Sta 4	1	12	1	3			17
Sta 5			2				2
Sta 6		6		2			8
“near-native”			1				1
Native							0
Total	1	24	8	16	0	0	49

Init: Initial, inte: integrated, fin: final, ellip:elliptic, auton: autonomous, inc:incomplete Sta: acquisitional stages (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004)

- 37 When *seulement* first appears, at stage 2, it is used in three different positions although the preferred one is the elliptic position, *i.e.* in noun phrases, as in example [11]. It is also integrated, as in [12] or placed at the end of the utterance in a final position.

[11] I: mm d'accord oui . depuis combien de temps tu cherches / un appartement ?

E: euh *seulement* une semaine

I: seulement une semaine d'accord . donc (Pel, sta 2)

[12] E: mais c'est SIM c'est *seulement* Un (SOUPIR) Un appartement avec un pièce (l:mhm mhm) et asse- assez grand (l:mm) cuisine . (Pel, sta 2)

- 38 There is only one token of *seulement* in an initial position. It is produced at the stage 4.

[13] E: oui . / eh mm: dE littérature aussi . / c'est *seulement* UN roman de Balzac . / (l:mhm) e:t je n'ai: rien / fait comme ça / d'avant . // *seulement* un roman / pendant trois+ / trois mois (Mon, sta 4).

- 39 In a quantitative examination of adverbs ending in-*ment*, Bilger (2004) has shown that with a ranking of 17 *seulement* is not among the most frequently used adverbs. In contrast, in studies on second language acquisition *seulement* has been proven to be one of the first to appear (Benazzo, 2000; Sanell, 2007). The fact that the native speakers in our corpus do not use *seulement* seems to confirm Bilger's results. This dearth of occurrences in NS production prevents us from comparing the learners' placement of this adverb in oral production to that of native speakers. However, in Sanell (2007) the group of NS was enlarged to a total of 25 informants in order to allow a comparison. The results of that investigation show that there are 11 tokens in 25 interviews and that the NS either place it in a final position (5 tokens) or integrated (4 tokens).
- 40 An empirical study of 48 Swedish adverbs in spoken language interaction has shown that the Swedish equivalent of *seulement* "bara" is the most frequently used adverb with approximately 900 occurrences in a total of 4700 for all 48 adverbs (Nilsson, 2005). In Swedish *bara* is multifunctional but the most common function, according to Nilsson (2005: 125), is the restrictive one corresponding to *only* or *no more than*. It is not unlikely that the Swedish learners are influenced by the frequent use of *bara* in Swedish, which would explain their use of *seulement* in French L2.

Synthesis of positions of seulement

- 41 When *seulement* first appears, at stage 2, it is used in an elliptic position (preferred), integrated or placed in a final position. At the advanced stages the integrated position is favored. There are no tokens in the native speakers' production of our corpus.

Figure 4. Distribution of syntactic positions of *seulement* (relative frequency/stage)

Number of tokens: Sta 1=0, sta 2=8, sta 3=13, sta 4=17, sta 5=2, sta 6=8, NN=1, NS=0.

5.1.4. Vraiment

Table 6. Distribution of syntactic positions of *vraiment* (tokens/stage)

Vraiment	Syntactic positions						Total
	init	inte	fin	ellip	auton	inc	
Sta 1							
Sta 2					1		1
Sta 3		7	1		8		16
Sta 4		4	1		4		9
Sta 5		18	9	1	4	3	35
Sta 6	1	38	1	3	6	10	59
“near-native	4	47	1			4	56
Native	5	47	1	2	2	3	60
Total	10	161	14	6	25	20	236

Init: Initial, inte: integrated, fin: final, ellip:elliptic, auton: autonomous, inc:incomplete Sta: acquisitional stages (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004)

- 42 At stage 1 no tokens of *vraiment* were found at all. Like *seulement*, the first appearance of *vraiment* is detected at stage 2. At this stage *vraiment* is produced in an autonomous position *i.e.* in an answer or a prosodically independent unit (one single token):

[14] I: c'est pas la même chose que conduire à Stockholm ?
E: eh non (RIRE) . *vraiment* non . (Pel, sta 2)

- 43 The first appearance of *vraiment* placed in the rheme, thus in the integrated position, is observed at stage 3 as in example [15]. The autonomous and integrated positions are present, and (what it seems) at equal frequency (8 and 7 tokens respectively, and used by three and four informants respectively).

[15] E: oui pf oui ça va mais c'est *vraiment* beaucoup à faire.
(Eme, sta 3)

- 44 At stage 3, the final position of *vraiment* appears (one token):

[16] I: oui / ça c'est difficile hein + d'avoir un appartement aujourd'hui .
E: ah ça coûte cher / *vraiment* (Siv, sta 3)

- 45 At stage 4 occurrences at the autonomous and integrated positions are still of equal frequency. Here at stage 4 we also found the very first appearance of a so-called *non-canonic* position integrated in the rheme as in [17] which indicates a more elaborated organization of the discourse. The position of *vraiment* in [17] should be compared to the use of *vraiment* before an infinitive: « il faut *vraiment* apprendre beaucoup » (see also Bilger, 2004: 75) ⁷.

[17] E : ça suffit pas . / (I:mm mm) / il faut apprendre *vraiment* beaucoup (Jes, sta 4)

- 46 The most salient change in going from stage 4 to stage 5 is that the proportion of occurrences in integrated position has gained more importance and is three times more frequent than the autonomous position. It seems now that the proportion pattern with the integrated placement as being the *preferred position* before all other positions is established. This pattern is further reinforced at stage 6.

- 47 At stage 5, the elliptic position appears, as in [18]:

[18] E: la femme de ménage (RIRE) (I:mm) elle m'a beaucoup parlé . / mai:s
les autres non pas *vraiment* . (Ani, sta 5)

- 48 Autointerruptions where *vraiment* occurs in a syntactically incompleted utterance, as in [19] appear, somewhat surprisingly, first at stage 5. This category seems to play a certain role in the speech production from stage 5, a function we will come back to in section 5.2 (see *planning*).

[19] E: c'était *vraiment* c'était beau / (I:mm) tous les tous les images et tout ça
. (Ani, sta 5)

- 49 At stage 6, two major positional changes from the preceding stages are noticeable. The first is the appearance of *vraiment* in initial position (in the pre-front field) is found (one informant). This is shown in example [20]:

[20] parce que ça *vraiment* on s'est rendu compte qu'on connaissait rien /
mais rien . (Ker, sta 6)

- 50 The second major change is that the speakers now show the same proportion of the integrated position in the rheme as found in the “near-native” speech and native samples, *i.e.* at least four times more frequent than all other positions. The autonomous position is still important.

- 51 At the “near-native” stage there are two major differences compared to the preceding stages. Firstly, although the position before the rheme is not a frequent position, it is consolidated (three informants). Secondly, the autonomous position is now the least frequent. The positional pattern established within the “near-native” group agrees with that of the native speakers.

Synthesis of positions of *vraiment*

- 52 The first appearance of *vraiment* in autonomous position is found at stage 2, and first appearance of integrated position is found at stage 3, where the two positions are equally frequent, and so remain through stage 4. At stage 5 the proportion pattern for the integrated position, as being much more important than all other positions, is now established. This pattern is reinforced at stage 6. At stage 6 a major positional change is the first appearance of *vraiment* in initial position (one informant). At the “near-native” stage, major differences from the preceding stage are: 1) although not a frequent position, the initial position is consolidated (three informants), and 2) the autonomous position is the least frequent. The positional pattern established within the “near-native” group agrees, *grosso modo*, with that of the native speakers.

Figure 5. Distribution of syntactic positions of *vraiment* (relative frequency/stage)

Number of tokens: Sta 1=0, sta 2=1, sta 3=16, sta 4=9, sta 5=35, sta 6=59, NN=56, NS=60.

5.1.5. Synthesis

- 53 Table 7 below summarizes the results of the analysis of syntactic positions in our corpus. The analysis shows that *aussi* and *peut-être* are the first to appear, already at stage 1. They are placed in either an elliptic or autonomous position. The first occurrences of *vraiment* and *seulement* are found at stage 2. *Vraiment* at that stage is used solely in the autonomous position, whereas *seulement* has three different positions: integrated, final and elliptic, the latter being the most preferred. For *aussi*, the preference for the final position is maintained through all levels of acquisition (with the exception of stage 4). It is however not the preferred position for the NS who favor the integrated position. *Seulement* is

preferentially placed in the integrated position by the advanced learners, whereas there are no tokens at all in the native production. Hence, the learners' use of *aussi* differs from that of the NSs, even at the "near-native" stage. This is however not true for *peut-être*, *vraiment* and *seulement*, which are used in a native-like way from stage 5. The positional pattern of *peut-être* and *vraiment* becomes native-like at stage 5 where the integrated position is preferred. In accordance with native production *seulement* is used less frequently from stage 5 (Appendix: Table 3).

Table 7. Development of syntactic positions

Stage	Adverb	Syntactic positions
Stage 1	<i>Aussi</i> <i>Peut-être</i>	Elliptic, final Autonomous
Stage 2	<i>Vraiment</i> <i>Seulement</i>	Autonomous Elliptic, integrated, final
Stage 3	<i>Aussi</i> <i>Peut-être</i> <i>Vraiment</i>	Initial Elliptic, integrated Integrated., final
Stage 4	<i>Vraiment</i>	Final, non canonical integrated
Stage 5	<i>Peut-être</i> <i>Seulement</i> <i>Vraiment</i>	All native like positions
Stage 6	<i>Aussi</i> <i>Vraiment</i>	Integrated Initial
"Near-native"	<i>Aussi</i>	Still preference for final pos. (nonnative)

5.2. Functional analysis

- 54 In this section we discuss the following eight functions of the adverbs found in the nonnative speakers' production: confirmative, additive, restrictive, intensifying, mitigating, connective, comparative and planning. Although these functions can be semantic or pragmatic (Vold, 2008), we do not make this distinction in levels in our analysis. We focus here on the progression of functions through the stages. When examining the use of these adverbs, we found that each one was used for different discourse purposes and that some functions are linked to the syntactic position of the adverb in the utterance, whereas other functions are independent of syntactic position.

I. Confirmative function

- 55 This function is the first to appear with *aussi* (stage 1) and *vraiment* (stage 2). The confirmative function is clearly an interactive one where the learner confirms a previous suggestion made by the interviewer, as in [21]. The adverb in this function is not used for the addition of further items, as it is in the additive function.

[21] I: l'hiver . le mois de décembre le mois de janvier tu fais du cheval aussi ?
 E: l'hiver ?
 I: hiver . hiver
 E: ah hiver . eh oui . hiver / *aussi* (Jan, sta 1)

- 56 In example [21] above *aussi* is used by the learner with the purpose of confirming what the interviewer says in the first utterance. The interviewer asks whether the informant

goes horseback riding even in the winter and the learner confirms that he does: “yes, winter as well”.

- 57 *Vraiment* is used in examples [22] and [23] with confirmative function. The subject of [22] is a green district (*quartier*) in Stockholm, which is well known by both speakers, and the learner confirms by *vraiment* the positive impression the interviewer has of the district.

[22] I: mm / et puis l'été c'est formidable (E:oui) ce / quartier là .
E: *vraiment* .
I: oui très bien . (Siv, sta 3)

- 58 In example [23] the learner talks about the great interest he has in playing the piano and flute, and he confirms the suggestion that “it's a way to express oneself”.

[23] E: non c'est une mode de vivre oui .
I: une façon de s'exprimer ?
E: oui + *vraiment* (Jon, sta 3)

- 59 The confirmative function is used from the first stage of acquisition for *aussi* and at stage 2 for *vraiment*.

- 60 *Vraiment* with confirmative function at a text organizing level, has been found at late stages. In this use, *vraiment* seems to confirm and highlight a former statement, and it is often included in a clause- or turn-closing assertion (cf. *surassertion*, Maingueneau 2006). In this function, *vraiment* could be paraphrased with *en effet/effectivement*. This function appears at stage 6, as in example [24], and is found in “near-native” and native speakers, as in [25].

[24] E: je l'ai trouvé intéressant . mais j'ai / au début je l'ai trouvé: très très difficile . / (I:hm) (BRUIT) mai:s euh vers la: vers la fin du cours c'était: / (I:hm) *vraiment* intéressant . (Ker, Sta 6)

[25] E: bon moi j'ai une j'ai une chance eu:h / incroyable d'être: # en fait moi j'suis la: j'suis on e:st # y a une Française et une Américaine dans mon corridor . sinon c'est que des des Suédois . donc ça c'est *vraiment une chance* je pense . (Gaë, NS)

II. Additive function

- 61 The additive function, which is the “basic” function of *aussi*, appears early in the learner variety (cf. Benazzo, 2000, 2005; Sanell 2007). It is used for adding an entity, usually a noun phrase (cf. confirmative function, ex. 21). In the additive function *aussi* is either placed in the rheme, the integrated position, or in the final position as shown in [26] below. In this example the different means of transportation are discussed and the informant says that there is an old train and then adds that there is also a bus.

[26] I: qu'est-ce que tu prends / comme moyen de transport pour aller à Stockholm ?
E: ah c'est Roslagsbanan . / c'est u:n un vieux train . / un vieil train ? (I:mm)
oui SIM (RIRE) .
I: de Åkersberga ?
E: oui .
I: mm .
E: ça et c'est *aussi*: autobus . / on peut prendre + ce bus *aussi* .
I: autobus . SIM / aha . (Eva, sta 4)

- 62 Initial position is also used for additive *aussi* even though there are only a few tokens, e.g. [27]. In this example one language, English (*l'anglais*), is added to the number of languages that the learner feels are “replaced” by French while acquiring the latter.

[27] I: le français a pris la place de
 E: oui a pris la place
 I: il a jeté l'italien
 E: oui et aussi l'anglais l'anglais (Jon, sta 3)

- 63 There is no difference in use of the additive function between the learners at any stage or the native speakers.

III. Restrictive function

- 64 *Seulement* is generally used to express restriction and can be used either as a focus particle⁸ (König, 1991) or as a phrasal adverb. As a focus particle *seulement* is placed adjacent to, either before or after, the focused element (Börjesson, 2004). According to Nölke (1983: 127), it is usually placed immediately in front of the constituent in focus. However, post-position is also possible. For *seulement* as a phrasal adverb the preferred position is initial. It can then also be replaced by *mais*: « C'est une bonne voiture, *seulement* elle coûte cher⁹ ». The results of our study show that the learners only use *seulement* for restriction as a focus particle as shown in examples [28] and [29] below. In [28] *seulement* is used to express a limitation of courses taken by the informant.

[28] E: je suis pas des cours à soixante points . je suis *seulement* eh / eu:h ceux de de votre / votre cours à / oh ton cours à cin cinq points (Len, sta 5)
 [29] I: mm . SIM / est-ce que tu a:s / séjourné en France donc est-ce que tu as travaillé ou ... ?
 E: non j'ai *seulement* étudié . // (I:(TOUX) mhm) oui / vingt-cinq heures par semaine . (Yvo, sta 4)

- 65 The lack of *seulement* in the native speakers' production unfortunately makes a comparison with them impossible.

IV. Intensifying function

- 66 *Vraiment* has, beside the confirmative function, also an intensifying one. It then works as a quantifier (cf. *très*, *beaucoup*), and modifies either a propositional content (see *a* below) or a speech act (see *b* and *c* below). In many cases, there is no clear-cut distinction between confirmative and intensifying functions.

a) Modification of propositional content

- 67 The intensifying function seems particularly conspicuous with an adjective/adverb (cf. Bilger, 2004), as in examples [30] and [31].

[30] E: au théâtre oui il y a une euh st organisation en Stockholm ah des Théâtres dans les parcs . (I: mm mm) et c'est *vraiment vraiment* / bien (I:mm) ils sont si bons des groupes qui sont là (I:mm) mais maintenant c'est / c'est automne (Siv, sta 3)
 [31] I: tu as lu déjà / plusieurs livres en français ou ?
 E: non c'est *vraiment* mal . la moitié de L'Etranger (I:oui oui) en trois jours (I:oui) mais puis *seulement* un livre au début du cours . (I:oui) un livre de pour des enfants . + oui . (Jon, sta 3)

- 68 There are two sub-categories of the intensifier which are linked to their position in the utterance. Both entail modification of the speech act: *post-rheme* and *emphatic*.

b) *Post-rheme* (Morel, Danon-Boileau, 1998)

- 69 This right detached position of a modus (*vraiment*) in the post-end field (see figure 1) could imply a modification/evaluation of the speaker's own speech act (intensifying the pragmatic force of the statement). In [32] the evaluation concerns the speech act of saying that the weather in the rainiest part of France was bright at the moment the learner was there. *Vraiment* could be paraphrased by *en fait* (Eng. *actually*), and evaluates the speech act as being contrary to expectations.

[32] Finistère il a fait très beau / °vraiment° (And, sta 5) [low intonation]

- 70 The typical intonation of a post-rheme is a low pitch (°x°, see also section 4.1). Stage 5 is the first stage where a post-rheme clearly is found.
- 71 The above mentioned type of *vraiment* (meaning *en fait*) is the only case of right detached modus which clearly has the function of being a post-rheme, as other cases of right detached modus could simply be cases of lack of planning of the learner, where the modus is placed after the rheme (instead of being integrated), as in [33]. Here, *vraiment* in the post-end field is either a post-rheme intensifier or indicates a non-native planning capacity.

[33] I: oui / ça c'est difficile hein + d'avoir un appartement aujourd'hui .
E: ah ça coûte cher / *vraiment*.
I: mm mm . (Siv, sta 3)

- 72 *Peut-être* as post-rheme could be found in native speakers, but the interpretation of right detached *peut-être* remains unclear for the same reasons as *vraiment*: whether it functions as a post-rheme *mitigator* (see V below) or simply reveals a non-native planning capacity, couldn't be shown.

c) *Emphatic*

- 73 A particular case of *vraiment* is found from stages 6 and in "near-native" and native speaker production. *Vraiment* has global scope and modifies a speech act (phrasal adverb). It is always placed in the pre-front field and is called *emphatic* function. Though this function is not very frequent, its presence seems to be an indication of a high-level or native like use, as seen in [34] and [35].

[34] les pauvres je les plains quoi . *vraiment* j'ai peur pour eux (Ann, NS)
[35] e:t e:t j'ai eu des surprises là (I: ouais) *vraiment* j'ai eu des surprises (I: mhm) . et là je me suis sentie très très suédoise (Cam, "near-native")

V. Mitigating function

- 74 All examples of *peut-être* could be characterized as mitigators of a propositional content (*rheme*). *Peut-être* appears at stage 2 as a mitigator of confirmations (two cases out of three), shown in [36].

[36] I: mais toi peut-être tu parles mieux maintenant ?
E: (RIRE) oui *peut-être* . (I:mm) non . (Car, sta 2)

- 75 The function of mitigating negation appears with both *peut-être* (*peut-être pas*) and *vraiment* (*pas vraiment*) at stage 4 (examples 37, 38)¹⁰. In [37] the interviewer asks if E would like to live in another country than Sweden.

[37] E: oui c'est / *peut-être pas* pour toujours + mais /
 I: pas pour SIM toujours .
 E: pour quelque:s années mais / (I:mm) . / je sais pas mais (Jes, sta 4)
 [38] I: tu cherches un appartement ? / tu: / tu t'es + inscrite ?
 E: euh *pas vraiment* . / mai:s (Eva, sta 4)

- 76 The two adverbs *vraiment* and *peut-être* appear at stage 6 in contexts where the pragmatic function “understatement” is expressed, as in the following example:

[39] I: mm / mm . / et la cité universitaire c'était: confortable?
 E: (RIRE) *peut-être pas* très / mai:s (Ker, sta 6).

- 77 In the answer to [39], *peut-être* is interpreted as mitigating the ironically exaggerated characterization *pas très [confortable]*. An ironic use of *pas vraiment* is found with the same informant (*ça s'est pas vraiment bien passé*, meaning *ça s'est pas du tout bien passé*, Ker:2, sta 6).

VI. Connective function

- 78 *Aussi* can also be used to connect one utterance to another as shown by Perdue and Watorek (1999). In this function *aussi* could also be considered additive but instead of adding one entity to another, or a list of others, it is used to add an utterance, a new rheme, and thus connects one proposition to the next, as in [40]. In this example Yvonne says that she has studied at *Komvux* “and also I have studied I have followed two courses in France”. Our results show that, in this function, the adverb is either preceded by *et* (*and*) or *mais* (*but*), as in [41].

[40] E: mm st j'ai étudié à: Komvux . / e:t / *aussi* j'ai étudié j'ai fait deux cours
 Xen France euh / une à Avignon et une à BEsançon . (Yvo, sta 4)

- 79 The native speakers use « *et puis aussi* » which is an expression that is not found in the production of the learners, not even that of the “near-natives”.
- 80 *Peut-être* is used in a similar way, as in [41].

[41] E: mai:s en classe quand on va / demander quelque chose tout le monde
 demande en suédois et pour moi c'est+
 I: ah c'est+ étrange ça SIM . / oui .
 E: pour moi c'est très étrange (RIRE) .
 I: oui . / + en général .
 E: parce qu'on a oublié beaucoup . / parce que: / (I:oui bien sûr) c'est pas
 naturel de parler français en classe je pense .
 I: non / mhm . très bien .
 E: mais *peut-être* ça dépend des classes aussi
 (Yvo, sta 4)

- 81 In this example *peut-être* is used to link the last utterance to the learner's previous statement that it isn't natural to speak French in class “but perhaps that depends on the classes too”.

VII. Comparative

- 82 At the advanced high stage there is one token of *aussi* in a function that hasn't been observed in the preceding stages. It is used in a comparative function corresponding to "such".

[42] E: oui j'ai commencé par le français (I:oui) eu:h c'était il y a huit ans (I:oui) . d'abord j'avais pas du tout l'intention de de poursuivre les études de français (I:ouais) au- aussi longtemps que je l'ai fait (I:ouais) e:h / je pense # (Ste, sta 6)
 [43] mais entourée de gens qui parlent comme moi c'est-à-dire qui a un *aussi* bo:n jargo:n (Min, "near-native")

VIII. Planning

- 83 The function of *vraiment* as a "planning" marker, is to serve as an "island of reliability" (cf . Dechert, 1983), in particular the sequence « *c'est vraiment* » followed by syntactic restructuring. *Vraiment* in these sequences seems to serve as a production strategy, giving the speaker more time to plan his utterance. This function emerges at stage 5.

[44] c'est-à-dire que / euh en France le discours commun c'est de dire "je suis / pas raciste mais" (RIRE) . / (I:mm) et ça c'est *vraiment* . je sais pas (I:mm) SIM si c'e:st / significatif ou pas . (Mel, LN)
 [45] E: oui oui j'ai suivi de cours / (I:mm) . eh et ça c'était *vraiment* # j'ai suivi des cours # ben les meilleurs cours de ma vie . + oui c'était vraiment très très bien . (Mat, sta 6)

5.3. Development of the four adverbs across the stages

- 84 This section discusses the order of acquisition of the four adverbs. Our proposal is based on their first appearances. Appearance concerns position on the one hand and function on the other hand. In our description of the adverbs we also consider the number of occurrences and relate the development to the stages (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004).

Stage 1

- 85 *Aussi* and *peut-être* appear. Figure 6 shows that *aussi* is preferably placed in an elliptic position whereas *peut-être* is used in the autonomous position. This stage is characterized *inter alia* by nominal utterance structure, chunks such as « *je voudrais* », non-finite forms « *je faire* » and bare nouns. Thus the utterance structure doesn't permit the integration of the adverbs at this level. At stage one *aussi* fulfills the confirmative function, which is the first to occur. As shown in example [46] the learner uses *aussi* in order to verify what the interviewer has said.

[46] E: eh je l lis en suédois et en allemand .
 I: en allemand + *aussi* ?
 E: *aussi* SIM oui oui . (Car, sta 1)

- 86 At this stage *aussi* is also used in additive function. Jan plays jazz and also classical music.

[47] I: quel style de musique tu joues ?
 E: eh c'est jazz et auss- et classique *aussi* .
 I: oui ? mm
 E: un un peu blues et <punk> (RIRE) (Jan, sta 1)

- 87 The following Figure (6) presents the number of tokens of the adverbs used at stage 1 and their syntactic positions. These adverbs are not used frequently at this stage.

Figure 6. Stage 1.

- 88 *Vraiment* and *seulement* are not used at all whereas there are five tokens of *aussi* and two of *peut-être*. The latter are used at this stage only as echoic repetitions following a solicitation from the learner.

Stage 2

- 89 At this stage, the first occurrences of *vraiment* and *seulement* are found. As stage 2 contains verbal utterance structures with polyfunctional “base” forms and some subordination (See section 4.2 above and Bartning, Hancock, to appear), the integration of adverbs in the verbal field is possible. Integration is attested in the use of *aussi* and *seulement* even though peripheral positions are dominant. *Peut-être* and *vraiment* are less frequent and are placed exclusively in peripheral positions.
- 90 The only token of *vraiment* at this stage has confirmative function. *Seulement* appears in its restrictive function and *aussi* is used more frequently (15 occurrences).

Figure 7. Stage 2.

Stage 3

- 91 At this stage there are few non-finite verbal forms and there is a more systematic and regular use of tense and inflexion of verbs. The first cases of the subjunctive emerge and subordinate clauses such as causal, relative, interrogative and temporal develop further. Integration of all four adverbs is found at stage 3 (first appearance of *peut-être* and *vraiment* in this position). *Aussi* and *peut-être* appear with connective function. In [48] the two new features of this stage are illustrated: firstly, the integrated syntactic position of *peut-être*, secondly, the connective function of *aussi* : *et aussi je*, where *aussi* has an initial position. (The example also shows the additive function of *aussi*: « je travaille là aussi » with the adverb placed in final position).

[48] I: vous pouvez SIM me parler de ce travail ? ce que + vous
 E: ah c'est des SIM nouvelles (I:oui) j'ai travaillé en / avec des nouvelles
 (I:oui) euh je suis euh je ne sais pas le mot pour ça parce que je parle tout le
 temps dans la radio quand (I:oui) SIM quand vous écoutez la radio (I:oui oui)
 SIM c'est *peut-être* moi . d'accord ? (I: oui . présentatrice) SIM oui mhm (I:ok
 mhm) SIM e:t euh et *aussi* je: je fais de:s informations / j'ai un petit bureau
 (I:mhm) euh / à moi (I:oui) e:t je travaille là *aussi* . (Siv, sta 3)

Figure 8. Stage 3.

Stage 4

- 92 At stage 4 (Figure 9) we found the first appearance of post-rheme (= final position with a particular intonation contour, Morel, Danon-Boileau, 1998: 28), as shown in example [32] above, which seems to be a sign of the onset of an advanced discourse organization in terms of modification of the speaker's own speech act (cf. *stance adverbs* in Biber *et al.*, 1999; *adverbes d'énonciation* in Molinier, Levrier, 2000). Here we also found the very first appearance of *non canonic* position in the rheme which also points to a more elaborated organization of the discourse, i.e. a certain freedom to chose the word order and thus to focalize one particular element (one token).
- 93 Stage 4 is represented by the emergence of typical French grammar but some non-finite verb forms remain (*je lire*). The clitic pronoun appears before the auxiliary and there are isolated cases of the *conditionnel*, the *plus-que-parfait* and the subjunctive. However, these complex forms still appear in mainly non-complex syntax (Bartning, Hancock, to appear).

- 94 In the use of adverbs the analysis shows elaboration of discourse functions concerning *vraiment* (post-rheme) and *aussi* (more frequent use of connective function). The positions of the adverbs in the utterance still differ from the native pattern and the frequency varies from native use. There are, for example, few tokens of *vraiment* and several of *seulement* in the learner production whereas the NS in our corpus use *vraiment* rather frequently and *seulement* not at all (see table 2 in Appendix).
- 95 The elliptic position of *peut-être* is reduced in favor of the initial and integrated positions. *Seulement* is integrated and used for restriction in a way that is possible in French, as in [49].

[49] E: e:h je travaille pas . je: / je fais *seulement* mes études . / et maintenant j'ai commencé à suivre deux cours / eh de calligraphie e:t de: / de de peinture / de la peinture . (Chr, sta 4)

Figure 9. Stage 4.

Stage 5

- 96 At stage 5 (Figure 10) we see the first appearance of “auto-interruption” (position “unclassifiable”/other). This function seems to be important for discourse planning, where *vraiment* # (alone) or chunks of *vraiment* like « c’est vraiment # » are used as starting elements or “islands of reliability” to signal upcoming speech or to hold the floor (= filled pause).
- 97 From stage 5, the advanced medium stage, there is a change in the learners’ use of the studied adverbs. The syntactic positional pattern as well as the frequency are more native-like for *peut-être*, *seulement* and *vraiment* (See table 3 in Appendix). The integrated position dominates for *vraiment* and *peut-être*. *Seulement* is scarce in accordance with native use. As for the syntactic position of *aussi* it is not yet native-like with final position dominating in the learner production. Thus the use of the other three adverbs has become native-like. This native-likeness corresponds to other features present at this stage: Stage 5 is characterized by the development of inflectional morphology that becomes functional. The *conditionnel*, *plus-que-parfait* and *future simple* are mostly used correctly and the subjunctive becomes more productive. The use of *vraiment* as a discourse planning device goes together with increasing complex utterances and multi-propositional subordination, as in native speech (Bartning, Hancock, to appear).

Figure 10. Stage 5.

Stage 6

- 98 Stage 6 is represented by the stabilizing of inflectional morphology even in multi-propositional utterances (Bartning, 2009). The learner can at this stage manage to handle several levels of information at the same time.
- 99 The native-like use of *peut-être*, *seulement* and *vraiment* persists as do the non native-like placement of *aussi* (Figure 11).
- 100 Some new functions are found at this stage. An *emphatic* confirmative function (initial position) of *vraiment* appears (see ex. 34 and 35 above).
- 101 Aussi is used in a native-like comparative function shown in [50] in which the learner says that he did not have any intention to study French for such a long period of time as he ended up doing.

[50] E: oui j'ai commencé par le français (I:oui) eu:h c'était il y a huit ans (I:oui) . d'abord j'avais pas du tout l'intention de de poursuivre les études de français (I:ouais) au- aussi longtemps que je l'ai fait (I:ouais) e:h / je pense # (And, sta 6)

Figure 11. Stage 6.

“Near-native”

- 102 At this level the overall production of the L2 language is native-like (Bartning, Hancock, to appear). This is true also for the adverbs of this study as can be seen in Figures 12 and 13. With the exception of one token, *seulement* has disappeared in accordance with native use (cf. 5.1.3). The dominant position of *peut-être* and *vraiment* is the integrated position. The non canonic placement of *vraiment* within the rheme is consolidated (three informants). *Peut-être*, *vraiment* and *aussi* are used in various native-like functions. At this stage: the complete (syntactic and intonational) left dissociation of the *peut-être* is marked by post positioned *que*.

Figure 12. “near-native” production.

Natives

- 103 Figure 13 below shows that native speakers prefer placing the adverb in the integrated position. It also shows that among the four adverbs, *vraiment* is the most frequently used. This tendency is observed also in the learners’ production from stage 5 onwards. However, the Swedish learners use *aussi* more frequently than native speakers (Chanet, 2004 and Table 2 in Appendix).

Figure 13. Native production.

5.4. Summary: Proposal of an inferred order of acquisition

- 104 In Table 8 below, all functions and positions of the analyzed adverbs are shown according to the stage at which they appear in our cross-sectional data. It seems that there are similarities in the development of *aussi* and *vraiment* (addition/enhancement) on the one hand and *peut-être* and *seulement* (moderation/restriction) on the other. Both *aussi* and *vraiment* have basic confirmative functions in the interaction from the start of their appearance. They also seem to assume “new” functions up to stage 6. They are more polyfunctional than *peut-être* and *seulement*. In our corpus all functions of these two adverbs have already appeared at stage 3.

Table 8. Appearance of functions and positions

Stage	Function/ Position	<i>Aussi</i>	<i>Peut-être</i>	<i>Seulement</i>	<i>Vraiment</i>
1	Func	1. Confirmative 2. Additive	Echo	-	-
	Pos	1. Final 2. Elliptic	Autonomous	-	-
2	Func		Mitigating confirmation	Restrictive	Confirmative
	Pos	Initial/integr	Initial	Integr/final/ elliptic	Autonomous
3	Func	Connective	1. Mitigating SV + SN, 2. Connective		Intensifying
	Pos		Integr/elliptic		Integr/final
4	Func				1. Mitigation (<i>pas vraiment</i>); 2. Speech act modification: <i>post-rheme</i>
	Pos	Autonomous		Initial	1. Final 2. Integr.
5	Func				Planification
	Pos				Elliptic
6	Func	Comparative			1. Speech act modification: <i>emphatic</i> ; 2. Turn closing
	Pos		Final		Initial
Near nat.					

- 105 The appearance of positions and functions (Table 8) allows proposing an inferred order of acquisition of functions (Table 9 below).

Table 9. Order of acquisition of functions

Adverb	Functions
<i>Aussi</i>	confirmative > additive > connective > comparative
<i>Peut-être</i>	Echo > mitigating propositional content > connective
<i>Seulement</i>	Restrictive (local)
<i>Vraiment</i>	Confirmative > intensifying > mitigating (<i>pas vraiment</i>) > post-rheme* > planification marker > emphatic marker*

*speech act modification.

- 106 The acquired functions could be described with respect to *scope*, an aspect that concerns previous descriptions of the adverbs (see also section 2) as either sentence/phrasal adverbs (global scope) or focus particles (local scope). At the interactional level adverbs function with global scope. Three adverbs, *aussi*, *peut-être* and *vraiment*, appear first as global markers (confirmative and mitigating confirmation) in the interaction. They also develop local functions (additive, mitigating SN, intensifying). As seen above (Table 7), *vraiment* and *aussi* are the most polyfunctional adverbs, and are, not surprisingly, also the most frequent markers (see Table 2 in Appendix). Together, they constitute 70 % of the tokens (521/758) found in the corpus. Only *seulement* is found with solely a local function (restrictive) in the corpus.

6. Conclusion

- 107 This study has illustrated the development of syntactic placement and discourse functions of four adverbs in French L2 in a learner corpus. Describing the use of the adverbs at different levels of acquisition, we asked whether an order of acquisition could be inferred from our data. We expected to find an increasing number of functions indicating that the learners become more advanced. The connective function of *aussi* and *peut-être* is one of those appearing later, which is paralleled by a movement of the adverbs to initial position. The pragmatic functions of *vraiment* (*emphatic* and *post-rheme*) also follows a movement out of the inner clause/rheme (Table 8 and 9). It would be interesting to see in which way this *syntactic isolation* with simultaneous development of pragmatic functions has similarities with the historical *pragmaticalization* (Dostie, Pusch, 2007) from adverbs to discourse markers.
- 108 As stated in the introduction, the positioning of the four adverbs seems to develop during the course of acquisition: *aussi* and *seulement* move into the utterance from peripheral positions, while left dissociation (= initial position) seems to be a late feature of *vraiment* and *peut-être* (*peut-être*, in the initial position, is part of a prosodically integrated unit up to stage 6). However our frequency results modify this picture. Although *aussi* is integrated at an early stage, the final position remains the most frequent one at late stages. As for *vraiment* and *peut-être*, the integrated position is by far the most frequent position from stage 5.
- 109 The group of “near-native” informants shows the consolidation of advanced pragmatic and discourse functions. This group does not differ from the informants of stage 6 in the sense that we did not find any additional functions (Table 8). Of course, this does not exclude subtle differences that our method does not reveal. Concerning the syntactic position of *aussi* in the “near-native” production, there is a difference in the *positional* pattern compared to that of native speakers, the former preferring the final position of *aussi* (section 5.1.1). This adverb is also more frequently used by the “near-natives” than by natives (Appendix, Table 3: 39 vs 21 tokens/10 000 words).
- 110 We have seen that at stages 1-4, the learners use the adverbs in various positions and functions that are not always native-like such as the frequent use of *seulement* that is not attested in the native production. As an explanation for the learners’ use of *seulement* we have put forward (section 5.1.3) the hypothesis that the Swedish learners are influenced by their L1 (of the equivalent *bara*). From stage 5, they follow the low frequency in the native French production (Appendix, Table 3).
- 111 The analysis has shown that from stage 5 onwards the learners follow native positional patterns, on the whole (Figures 10-13). An exception from this tendency is the recurrent final syntactic placement of *aussi*, which still remains in the “near-native” group. Also, an interesting feature at stage 6 is the appearance of initial position of *vraiment*. A hypothesis generated from this study would then be that frequency patterns of adverbs (irrespective of the position) in acquisition seem to be established earlier (at stage 5) than positional patterns. If native-like use (frequency) of *peut-être*, *vraiment* and *seulement* is established from stage 5, it leaves the question of the non native-like frequency of *aussi* unanswered. This question ultimately remains to be investigated in other learner corpora.

Appendix

Table 1. List of informants (Interview number in figures)

<i>Beginners, stages 1-3</i>	<i>Acq. stage</i>	<i>Advanced high, stage 6</i>
Jan:2, 3	1	Ida:4
Clara:1	1	Kerstin:1
		Nils
Carin:3, 4	2	Sten
Pelle:4, 5	2	Matilda
Siv:1, 2	3	
Robert:6, 7	3	
Jonas:3, 4	3	
Emelie:6, 7	3	
<i>Advanced low, stage 4</i>		<i>Near native</i>
Yvonne:1		Liv
Eva:1		Camilla
Christina:1		Moa
Jessica:1		Minna
Mona:1		Patrick
<i>Advanced medium, stage 5</i>		<i>Native speakers</i>
Lena:4		Anne
Marie:5		Isabelle
Pernilla:7		Mélanie
Anders:2		Olivier
Anita:2		Pierre-Nicolas

Table 2. N of occurrences of adverbs in the corpus (73 271 words in total)

Stages	Aussi	Peut-être	Seulement	Vraiment	Total
1	5	2	0	0	7
2	17	3	8	1	29
3	26	14	13	16	69
4	41	29	17	9	96
5	51	25	2	35	113
6	40	44	8	59	151
“near-natives”	72	34	1	56	163
LN	33	37	0	60	130
Total	285	188	49	236	758

Table 3.: Frequency of adverbs (tokens of adv/10 000 words). Value of the sub-corpus « parole privée » from the Corpus de Référence du Français Parlé (CRFP, Bilger 2004).

Stages	Aussi	Peut-être	Seulement	Vraiment
1-3	48	19	21	17
4	55	23	23	12
5	42	21	2	29
6	38	42	8	57
“near-natives”	39	19	0.5	31
NS (InterFra)	21	24	-	39
External corpora of oral French L1	CORPAIX: 18 CRFP: 24	No information found	CORPAIX: 2 CRFP: 1.4	CRFP*: 16

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NOTES

1. See also Telemann *et al.* (1999).
2. We adopt as a general definition of *rheme* what is being said about a topic.

3. Unclear prosodic features make the distinction between end field and post-end field sometimes difficult in practice (in particular in L2). “Final position” could denote either of the two.
 4. This means that the post-rheme has its own intonation contour and that its frequency is lower than the preceding segment.
 5. Transcription conventions : I: Interviewer; E: Student; / // //: short, medium and long pause; + SIM: beginning and end of simultaneous talk; SIM: follows simultaneous talk of the interviewer; (RIRE): non-verbal sound; eh euh: hesitation; X: incomprehensible syllable; :: lengthened syllable; NON: accentuated syllable; (I:mm): feedback; < >: code-switch or non-existent word; St: click of the tongue; #: interruption / restructuring.
 6. *Samtal i Göteborg* was collected for a sociolinguistic project in the 1980s and consists of two-party conversations in an informal context (Dahl, 1997).
 7. Portée de proximité.
 8. Also referred to as *adverbe paradigmatisant* (Nølke, 1983).
 9. Example from *Le Petit Robert*.
 10. Schlyter (1977, p. 178) suggests that “*pas vraiment*” forms one semantic unity as an attenuator.
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ABSTRACTS

This empirical study of a learner corpus of 40 interviews, investigates the acquisition of the four adverbs *aussi*, *peut-être*, *seulement* and *vraiment* (*also*, *maybe*, *only* and *really*). Although these four adverbs are non-obligatory elements in the utterance, they seem to have two fundamental modifying functions, namely enhancement (*aussi* and *vraiment*) and mitigation (*peut-être* and *seulement*). They also appear at early stages of acquisition. The study concentrates on the positions and discourse functions of the adverbs in a developmental perspective. Each adverb is characterized with respect to these two parameters across six developmental stages (Bartning, Schlyter, 2004) and a “near-native” learner variety. We combine a functional framework for acquisition (cf. Klein, Perdue 1997; Benazzo 2000, 2005) with earlier observations from corpus studies concerning the positions and the semantics of the adverbs (Schlyter, 1977; Chanet, 2004; Bilger, 2004). We expected that the number of functions of the adverbs would increase with the stages and we focus on the very advanced levels (stages 5-6). The study is to our knowledge one of the first to cover learner production from beginners to very advanced and “near-native” speakers. One hypothesis generated by the study is that frequency patterns of the target language could be acquired earlier than positional patterns. As a result of the study, we propose an order of acquisition of the four adverbs.

INDEX

Keywords: acquisition order, developmental stages, discourse functions, learner corpus, modifying adverbs, placement

AUTHORS

VICTORINE HANCOCK

Department of French, Italian and Classical languages, Stockholm University, 106 91 Stockholm, Sweden. victorine.hancock@frait.su.se

ANNA SANELL

Department of French, Italian and Classical languages, Stockholm University, 106 91 Stockholm, Sweden. anna.sanell@frait.su.se