

## **Time in evolving reference.**

### Temporal sequencing, tenses and focalisation

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#### **1. Introduction**

It is obvious that evolving reference is as much a matter of time and change as a matter of reference : a process occurs during an interval of time, and within that interval there occurs a change in the state of a referent, which may or may not imply a change in naming. Let us take the canonical example of evolving reference, as discussed in Brown & Yule (1983, 202) :

- (1) Kill an active, plump chicken. Prepare it for the oven, cut it into four pieces and roast it with thyme for 1 hour.

In this example, the referent of *an active, plump chicken* (that is any active, plump chicken which satisfies the description) will undergo changes of state during a time interval. The different stages in the process can be described as follows :

- (2) a. t1 : the killing of the active, plump chicken (for instance known as *Titi*)  
b. t2 : the preparation of the dead chicken *Titi*

- c. t3 : the cutting of the dead and prepared chicken for the oven into four pieces
- d. t4 : the roasting of the killed chicken prepared for the oven

This description assumes, of course, that each step in the process yields a result□ for instance, the killing phase implies the death of the chicken. Furthermore, the description assumes that time has elapsed between phases. A good cook is not supposed to cook a chicken which has just been killed : he or she should wait a couple of days. The last phase yields a final state : the chicken is ready to be presented on the table and eaten.

The type of discourse illustrated by (1) is neutral with regard to the tenses used, although the use of an imperative means that the utterance must be understood as an instruction applied to a future moment, which is associated with the performance of the instructions. In the following example, from a summary of Bertolluci's *The last emperor* (see Charolles & Schnedecker 1993, 106), the **present tense** supports the flow of time and the change of state of the *referent* :

- (3) En 1908, *un petit prince de trois ans* **est enlevé** à sa mère et assis sur le trône laqué de l'Empire de Chine. Pendant 16 ans, *il reste* un demi-dieu prisonnier de la Cité interdite. Puis *il mène* une vie de play-boy insouciant sous protection japonaise, se **retrouve** empereur de Mandchourie, **est arrêté** par les Russes et rendu à quarante trois ans aux Chinois qui *le rééduquent* dans un camp pendant dix ans.

At the end of this example, the reeducated man is no longer a three year old little prince. Even if the flow of time is indicated by temporal devices (*pendant seize ans, puis, à quarante-trois ans*), not all transitions of time are linguistically encoded : the temporal sequencing is mainly pragmatically inferred, and the interval between phases is computed on the basis of non-linguistic knowledge.

In other examples (such as narratives), transformations or changes of the referents are expressed in temporal sequences which are linguistically marked as narratives<sup>1</sup>, as in (4) :

- (4) Il **dessina** donc un cercle autour de lui avec un grand bâton, **respira** trois fois profondément et **lut** une des formules magiques du livre. Bientôt, à la place du petit garçon, il y **avait** un vieil homme à longue barbe.

(R. Graves, *Le grand livre vert*, Paris, Gallimard, 1979)<sup>2</sup>

Here, the sequencing is clearly indicated by verbal tenses. In French, the discourse effect of the *passé simple* is to make time progress : thus we can infer that the little boy first drew a circle, then deeply breathed, and finally read a magical formula. But the last sentence no longer uses the *passé simple*, which is predicted by the principle just formulated. In fact, *passé simple* in the last sentence seems rather odd :

- (5) Il **dessina** donc un cercle autour de lui avec un grand bâton, **respira** trois fois profondément et **lut** une des formules magiques du livre. (?) Bientôt, à la place du petit garçon, il y **eut** un vieil homme à longue barbe.

Why is this so ? What is going on here as far as time within evolving reference is concerned ? Is this phenomenon specific to evolving reference or to narratives?

This chapter is mainly concerned with the questions just formulated. Its main purpose is to shed special light on evolving reference from the point of view of temporal reference and temporal linguistic devices. It is argued that evolving reference implies a change in time, and that a change in time gives rise to special linguistic and narrative configurations. I also demonstrate that although typical narrative tenses might be expected to indicate the final phase (or result) of the process, they almost never occur for pragmatic reasons. Finally, I make certain

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1 This analysis assumes that a narrative implies temporal ordering and is linguistically marked, in French, by the *passé simple* tense.

2 All the examples are taken from Anne Reboul's corpus of evolving reference.

predictions about the type of linguistic referential entities (mainly indefinite descriptions and pronouns) which can be used in these discourse configurations, relative to the type of contexts in which they occur. The central concepts introduced in the discussion are *temporal sequencing*, aspectual classes such as *state*, *activity*, *accomplishment* and *achievement* (cf. Vendler 1967, Mouretalos 1981, Dowty 1986), *focalisation* (Genette 1972), *descriptive and interpretive use of language* (Sperber & Wilson 1986).

Before examining evolving reference within narratives, I introduce the classical way of describing tenses in narratives.

## **2. Time and the sequencing problem**

Narratives illustrate one of the most salient problem raised by the representation of time in language : this problem is traditionally known as the *sequencing problem* (cf. Wilson & Sperber 1993a and 1993b). The sequencing problem can be stated as follows :

### *The sequencing problem*

In narratives, time advances within utterances. So, if a narrative sentence contains no temporal adverbial, it must be interpreted as referring to an ulterior point of time in the narrative.

The crucial question is whether time advances because of the tenses used, because of principles of narrative discourse or because of pragmatic principles. There seem to be two main types of solutions to the sequencing problem : code solutions and inferential solutions. These solutions are examined in the next two sections.

### **2.1. Code solutions to the sequencing problem**

There are two code solutions to the sequencing problem : the first makes specific claims about the semantics of tenses (cf. Kamp & Rohrer 1983), whereas the second explains the sequencing problems within narratives in terms of principles of narrative discourse interpretation (cf. Dowty 1986, Cooper 1986).

In the first option, especially illustrated in the French tense system by the opposition between *passé simple* and *imparfait*, time is supposed to move with the *passé simple*, and to be static with the *imparfait*. The paradigmatic examples are given in (6) and (7) :

- (6) Lorsque Jean entra, Marie téléphonait.  
(When John entered the room, Mary was calling.)
- (7) Lorsque Jean entra, Marie téléphona.  
(When John entered the room, Mary called.)

In (6), we are supposed to understand that “Mary call” overlaps “John enter”, because of the *imparfait*. Thus, the second sentence expresses a state, whose temporal extension is not definite, although it includes the event “John enter”. In (7), the whole sentence connects two events occurring one after the other : thus the hearer has to understand that first John entered and then Mary called. This reading is again triggered by verbal tenses : the *passé simple* makes the temporal reference of the second sentence later than the temporal reference of the first. In other words, the *passé simple* changes the reference point, whereas the *imparfait* makes no such change<sup>3</sup>.

This solution has been widely criticized, mainly because it makes incorrect predictions (see for instance Tasmowski-de Rijk 1985) : first, the succession of two events does not imply a temporally sequential interpretation, as shown by (8); second, the connection with a state may imply a temporal order, as in (9) :

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3 The *reference point* (cf. Reichenbach 1947) describes the point of time from which an event is represented. It is opposed to the *event point*, that is, the moment at which the event occurs, and to the *speech point*, which is cotemporaneous with the speech by the speaker (*t<sub>0</sub>* or *now*). For a summary of Reichenbach’s analysis of tenses, see Moeschler (1994).

- (8) Marie chanta le récitatif et Bill l'accompagna au piano.  
(Mary sang the recitative and Bill accompanied her on the piano.)
- (9) Max alluma une cigarette. Le tabac avait un goût de miel.  
(Max lighted a cigarette. The tobacco had a honey flavour.)

Thus the first code solution is too strong. The second code solution, the aspectual one, is weaker, but we will see that it is also too strong.

The second code solution is illustrated by Dowty's analysis of the sequencing problem, and requires the notion of aspectual classes and a principle of interpretation for narrative discourses. Let us take Dowty's basic examples (1986, 37-38) :

- (10) (a) John entered the president's office. (b) The president walked over to him.
- (11) (a) John entered the president's office. (b) The president woke up.
- (12) (a) John entered the president's office. (b) The president sat behind a huge desk.
- (13) (a) John entered the president's office. (b) The clock on the wall ticked loudly.

The (b) sentences are respectively examples of accomplishment, achievement, state and activity. Dowty's definitions of the aspectual classes are the following (Dowty 1986, 42)<sup>4</sup> :

- (14) a. A sentence  $\square$  is stative iff it follows from the truth of  $\square$  at an interval  $I$  that  $\square$  is true at all subintervals of  $I$ .
- b. A sentence  $\square$  is an activity (or *energia*) iff it follows from the truth of  $\square$  at an interval  $I$  that  $\square$  is true of all subintervals of  $I$  down to a certain limit in size.

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<sup>4</sup> Dowty gives the same definition for *accomplishment* and *achievement*: for him, the main difference is that accomplishments are durative, whereas achievements are punctual.

c. A sentence  $\square$  is an accomplishment/achievement (or *kinesis*) iff it follows from the truth of  $\square$  at an interval  $I$  that  $\square$  is false at all subintervals of  $I$ .

So, the generalisation on temporal sequencing can be stated as follows (Dowty 1986, 37) :

- (15) a. If a sentence in a narrative contains an accomplishment or an achievement predicate but no definite time adverb, that sentence is understood to describe an event occurring later than the time of the previous sentence's event.
- b. If the second sentence of the sequence has a stative or an activity predicate, the state or process it describes is most usually understood to overlap with that of the previous sentence.

The appeal to aspectual class is in fact the tip of an iceberg : what these examples illustrate is a more general principle applied in narratives, the *temporal discourse interpretation principle* (TDIP) (cf. Dowty 1986, 45) :

*Temporal discourse interpretation principle (TDIP)*

Given a sequence of sentences  $S_1, S_2, \dots, S_n$  to be interpreted as a narrative discourse, the reference time of each sentence  $S_i$  (for  $i$  such that  $1 < i \leq n$ ) is interpreted to be :

- (a) a time consistent with the definite time adverbials in  $S_i$ , if there is any;
- (b) otherwise, a time which immediately follows the reference time of the previous sentence  $S_{i-1}$ .

This principle makes the correct prediction with regard to accomplishment/achievement predicates, that is, time goes forward. But it does not seem to work for activity and stative predicates, as in (12) and (13). For example such as (16), with a stative predicate,

- (16) Mary entered the president's office. There was a bound copy of the president's budget on his desk.

Dowty (1986, 49) gives the following explanation : “I argue that the TDIP actually tells us that the time of the budget’s being on the president’s desk was immediately after Mary entered the room, but that we are expected to assume in addition that this was not the first moment that it was there : it was no doubt there before Mary’s entry”. This very peculiar quotation can only be understood when it is completed by the following, which explains the principle of the TDIP with statives : “In reading a narrative such as [16], we are invited to interpret such “scene-describing” statives as if they were the perceptual observations that a hypothetical human observer would make in the situation described, either the narrator or the protagonist from whose point of view the narrative is constructed. We as readers vicariously re-live these perceptual events” (Dowty 1986, 50). In other words, if the TDIP obtains (in examples like (16)) in spite of intuitive evidence, it is because *facts are described from a subjective point of view*. We are now involved in a new problem described in terms of the concept of *subject of consciousness* by Banfield (1982) and that of *focalisation* by Genette (1972). What is interesting with this interpretation is that certain objections to the anaphoric interpretation of temporal sequencing (like (9)) can be easily explained as cases of represented speech and thought (Banfield) or as cases of internal focalisation (Genette). In any case, we see from such facts that it is impossible to separate tenses, narratives and point of view<sup>5</sup>. We will see below that this intrinsic relationship is crucial for the description of evolving reference within narratives.

## 2.2. Inferential solutions to the sequencing problem

There are two main inferential solutions : either sequencing effects in narratives result from conversational principles in the sense of Grice (1975), that is, they are

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5 For a more general approach to evolving reference and point of view, cf. Schnedecker (here) and Schnedecker & Charolles (1993).

conversational implicatures, or they are the result of a criterion on interpretation (the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance, cf. Wilson & Sperber 1993a and 1993b). Thus, temporal sequencing is defined either as implying implicatures or as implying explicatures.

There are two versions of the implicature solution. The first is the classical Gricean solution : temporal sequencing is the effect of the maxime of manner “be orderly”. The argument goes as follows : in narratives, if the narrator is cooperative and respects the maxims, then two ordered narrative sentences must be understood as representing a temporal sequencing (the reference point goes forward). The general argument to support this solution is the following. Let us take a connected sequence *P and Q*; logically (that is, truth-functionally), *P and Q* is equivalent to *Q and P*; but if there is a temporal effect conveyed by *P and Q*, it is not conveyed by *Q and P*; hence, the temporal effect is not a truth-functional aspect of the meaning of the sentence, so it must be a non-truth-functional aspect of the sentence, i.e. a conversational implicature. The cancellability of the temporal effects from *Q and P* is a verification of the argument. Examples (17) and (18) give a simple illustration of this :

- (17) a. Lucky Luke mounted Jolly Jumper and disappeared in the sunset.  
 b. Lucky Luke mounted Jolly Jumper and **then** disappeared in the sunset.
- (18) a. Lucky Luke disappeared in the sunset and mounted Jolly Jumper.  
 a. (?) Lucky Luke disappeared in the sunset and **then** mounted Jolly Jumper.

The second Gricean solution (cf. Levinson 1983, 1987, Atlas & Levinson 1981) requires a more general principle, the principle of informativeness (as a counterpart of the principle of quantity) which entitles the hearer to understand more than what is said unless it is contradictory with what is known. Thus, example (19) is developed using the procedure given in (20) (Levinson 1983, 146) :

(19) He turned on the switch and the engine started.

(20) “Given *p and q*, try interpreting it as :

(i) ‘*p* and then *q* ’; if successful try :

(ii) ‘*p* and therefore *q* ’; if successful try also :

(iii) ‘*p* , and *p* is the cause of *q* ’ ”.

This procedure explains why, in certain contexts, we are allowed to understand (19) as implicating a causal relation (as well as a temporal one), and not only a temporal relation between *P and Q*.

In any case, temporal sequencing is described as a conversational implicature, that is, a non-truth-functional aspect of the meaning of the sentence.

The second inferential solution defines temporal orderings as explicatures, that is, as enrichments of the logical forms of the sentences. The argument (as proposed by Carston 1988, 1993, Wilson & Sperber 1993a, 1993b) is the following. If the temporal effect of the connection of two sentences by *and* (*P and Q*) were an implicature, that is, a non-truth-functional aspect of its meaning, it would mean that the semantic (i.e. truth-functional) meaning of *and* should be its logical meaning. This implies that two sentences of logical forms *P and Q* and *Q and P* should have the same truth-conditions. Carston and Wilson & Sperber noticed that if this were true, utterances such as (20) and (21) should be respectively contradictory and tautological :

(20) a. What happened was not that Peter left **and** Mary got angry but that Mary got angry **and** Peter left.

b. not (P and Q), but (Q and P)

(21) a. It’s always the same at parties : either I get drunk **and** no-one will talk to me or no-one will talk to me **and** I get drunk.

b. (P and Q) or (Q and P)

But this is clearly not the case, which suggests that temporal sequencing is not a non-truth-functional aspect of the meaning of the sentence, but on the contrary a

truth-functional one; hence it cannot be an implicature, and can only be an explicature.

If temporal sequencing is not an implicature, then it is not possible to invoke a maxim or principle to explain it. What is the explanation then? In relevance theory (see Sperber & Wilson 1986, and more specifically Wilson & Sperber 1993a and 1993b), it is assumed that the principle which gives the adequate temporal interpretation is the principle of relevance : more precisely, the temporal interpretation is predicted to be the first interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance, that is, the first which creates an effect sufficient to balance the cognitive effort implied by the processing of the utterance. In other words, the interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance, that is, the interpretation according to which time goes forward for narratives, is predicted to be the first which comes to the mind. Therefore, neither specific nor *ad hoc* discourse principles are required : relevance theory and the principle of relevance make the correct predictions about temporal sequencing.

These different ways of explaining the sequencing problem are illustrated in the following diagram :

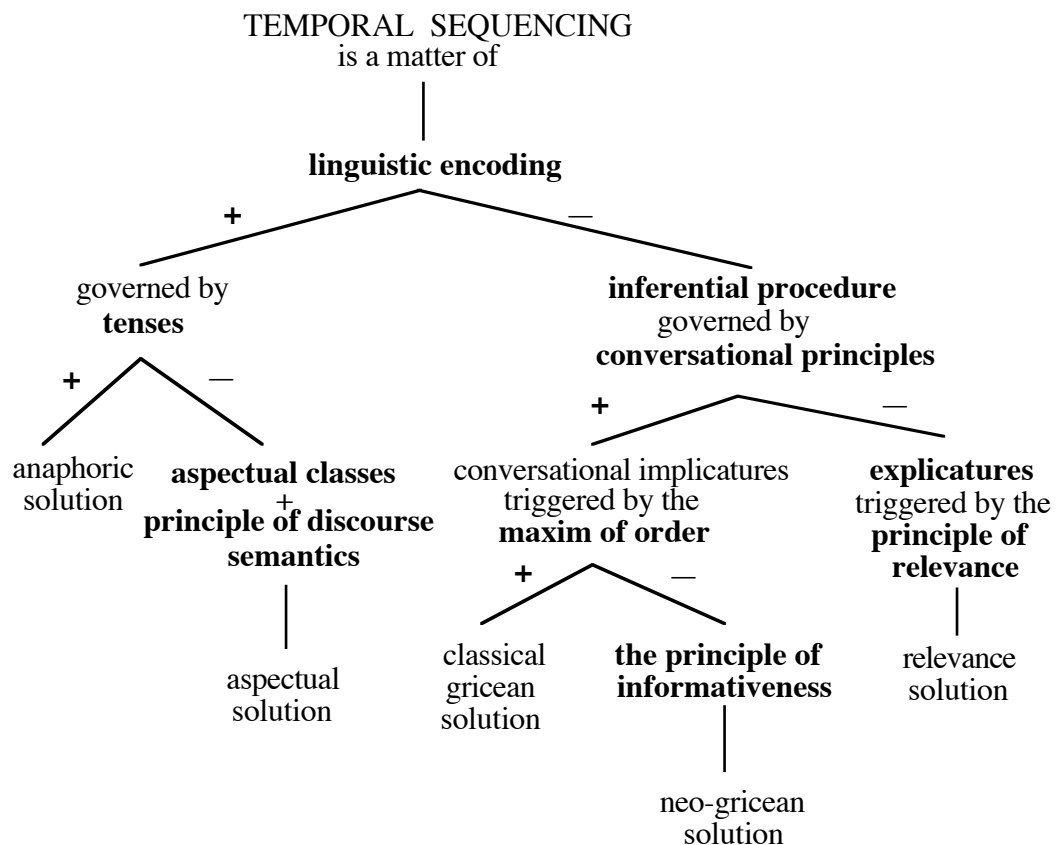


Figure 1

This schematic presentation will help us in discussing examples of evolving reference. We now turn to the question of evolving reference within narratives, and we look at them from the point of view of temporal sequencing.

### 3. Focalisation and narrative configuration in evolving reference

#### 3.1. Focalisation

When looking at narratives, a standard question is : from what point of view are the events described ? One traditional way of describing the relationship between a centre of perspective and narratives is to refer to the notion of *focalisation* (cf. Genette 1972), which belongs to the category of the *mode* (as opposed to the category of the *voice*). Whereas the voice answers the question *who is speaking*<sup>6</sup>, the mode answers another question : *who is seeing*<sup>6</sup> Focalisation is the central concept organising the category of mode, and involves a three-way distinction<sup>6</sup> :

- (a) a narrative discourse is *not focalised* when no specific centre of perspective is identified; typical narrative sequences, in which time advances, are not focalised;
- (b) a narrative discourse is *internally focalised* when the centre of perspective is a third person; in this case, we are in what Banfield (1982) calls *represented speech and thought (style indirect libre)*;
- (c) a discourse is *externally focalised* when no explicit centre of perspective is given, but we have to infer that the scene is perceived from a specific point of view.

I make the hypothesis that the narrative configurations where evolving reference occurs belong to either internal focalisation or external focalisation, and that the focalised aspect of evolving reference in narrative explains the particular distribution of tenses. In other words, I claim that it is because evolving reference in narrative is focalised that it manifests the particular narrative configuration we will look at now.

### 3.2. The data

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<sup>6</sup> See Sthioul (1995) for a very good synthesis and a description of verbal tenses using these definitions of focalisation within a procedural perspective.

Recall the first example of evolving reference within narratives given in (4)<sup>7</sup> :

- (4) Il **dessina** donc un cercle autour de lui avec un grand bâton, **respira** trois fois profondément et **lut** une des formules magiques du livre. Bientôt, à la place du petit garçon, il y **avait** un vieil homme à longue barbe.

(R. Graves, *Le grand livre vert*, Paris, Gallimard, 1979)

This example is very similar to the following, even if the preceding events are not in a narrative tense (*passé simple*) in (22), but rather in the *imparfait* :

- (22) Elle n'aurait pas cru que ce serait une sensation aussi étrange de rentrer. Pendant que la voiture la **portait** vers la vieille maison, elle se **sentait** rajeunir à chaque instant; bientôt elle n'**était** plus une dame âgée aux cheveux déjà grisonnants, mais une gamine en jupes courtes, avec, dans le dos, une longue natte de cheveux couleur de lin.

(S. Lagerlöf, *Le merveilleux voyage de Nils Holgersson à travers la Suède*, Paris, Presse Pocket, 1963, p.387)

In these two examples, the final state is described by a non-narrative tense, the *imparfait*. As such they contrast with examples where the final state is expressed in a narrative tense (*passé simple*) in (23) and in a retrospective perspective, with the *plus-que-parfait* ((24 and (25)) :

- (23) [*Les méchants frères aînés de Glück le forcent à fondre l'argenterie et les objets en métal précieux de leur famille, jusqu'au moment où il en arrive à une choppe qu'on lui avait offerte pour sa naissance et sur laquelle il y a l'image en bas-relief d'un petit homme.*]

Au prix d'un violent effort, Glück **recouvra** l'usage de ses membres et se saisit du creuset, qu'il **inclina** comme pour verser l'or. Mais au lieu d'une coulée d'or liquide, **vinrent**, d'abord, une jolie petite paire de jambes jaunes, puis les pans d'un habit, suivis de deux bras les

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7 In the following examples, the narrative sentences are in **bold** and the resulting state or event in **bold italics** .

poings collés aux hanches, et enfin la tête familière de son ami la chope. Après quoi les articles en question, s'unissant à mesure qu'ils roulaient hors du creuset, se **plantèrent** fermement sur le sol, sous la forme d'un petit nain doré, d'environ un pied et demi de haut.

(Ruskin, J. , *Le roi de la rivière d'or*, Paris, Bordas, 1980, 38-41)

- (24) A mesure que le nain parlait, sa silhouette se **fit** indistincte. Les couleurs qui jouaient sur sa robe **devinrent** une vapeur irisée de lumière nacrée; il **demeura** un instant nimbé de ces reflets comme d'un large arc-en-ciel. Les couleurs **pâlirent**, le voile de brume se **dissipa** dans les airs : le monarque *s'était évaporé*.

(Ruskin, J., *Le roi de la rivière d'or*, Paris, Bordas, 1980, 70)

- (25) Le chien se **releva** d'un bond et se **dressa** sur ses pattes de derrière. Sa queue **disparut**, ses oreilles se **mirent** à allonger, allonger; elles **devinrent** soyeuses, dorées; son nez **prit** un ton extrêmement rouge, ses yeux **clignotèrent** de malice : en trois secondes le chien *avait disparu* et devant Glück se *tenait* une vieille connaissance, le Roi de la Rivière d'Or.

“Merci, dit le monarque, mais ne sois pas effrayé”.

(Ruskin, J., *Le roi de la rivière d'or*, Paris, Bordas, 1980, 68)

Examples (4), (22), (23), (24) and (25) are basic examples of evolving reference within narratives, because they express three of the main narrative configurations, one of which is a standard narrative structure. I describe now these three configurations and I return below to the relationship between narrative configurations, points of view and temporal sequencing.

### 3.3. Narrative configurations within evolving reference

I claim that narratives can express evolving reference through three main configurations :

(i) The more predictable case is found in (23) : the final state is represented by a narrative tense (*passé simple*); we have thus the following temporal structure :

(26) *Configuration 1*

event<sub>1</sub> (*passé simple*),..., event<sub>n</sub> (*passé simple*),

where event<sub>1</sub> is the initial phase and event<sub>n</sub> the final phase

(ii) The less predictable, but more frequent situation, is represented in (4) and (22) : the final phase is expressed in a non-narrative, stative tense (*imparfait*); the configuration is the following :

(27) *Configuration 2*

event<sub>1</sub>,..., event<sub>n</sub>, state<sub>i</sub>

where state<sub>i</sub> is posterior to the preceding events

(iii) Finally, the last configuration is exemplified by (24) and (25) : a sequence of narrative sentences, with a change in the reference point, is followed by a resultative (achievement) in the *plus-que-parfait* :

(28) *Configuration 3*

event<sub>1</sub>,..., event<sub>n</sub>, achievement<sub>i</sub>

where achievement<sub>i</sub> is the resultative phase of the sequence of events

These three configurations do not seem to be equally frequent in evolving reference. Configuration 1 is, within Anne Reboul's corpus, the exception, although it should be the unmarked case. If evolving reference is a matter of temporal sequencing, then within narratives, it should adopt the standard configuration, that is, it should be associated with a narrative tense. Why is this not the case ? Why are configurations 2 and 3 in fact more predictable and *de facto* the unmarked cases ? To answer these questions, I begin with two remarks about example (23).

First, contrary to the examples of configurations 2 and 3, the last event of configuration 1 is not the final one in the relevant narrative sequence. Consider the whole sequence :

(29) Au prix d'un violent effort, Glück **recouvra** l'usage de ses membres et **se saisit** du creuset, qu'il **inclina** comme pour verser l'or. Mais au lieu d'une coulée d'or liquide, **vinrent**, d'abord, une jolie petite paire de jambes jaunes, puis les pans d'un habit, suivis de deux bras les poings collés aux hanches, et enfin la tête familière de son ami la chope. Après quoi les articles en question, s'unissant à mesure qu'ils roulaient hors du creuset, **se plantèrent** fermement sur le sol, sous la forme d'un petit nain doré, d'environ un pied et demi de haut.

“A la bonne heure!” **fit** le nain, étirant d'abord ses jambes, puis ses bras, et secouant ensuite sa tête de haut en bas, avant de lui faire décrire des cercles aussi grands qu'elle le lui permettait, et ce pendant cinq minutes d'affilée - sans nul doute afin de s'assurer qu'il **était** parfaitement bien assemblé. Glück le **contemplant** sans bouger, muet de stupeur. Le nain **était vêtu** d'un pourpoint à crevés d'or filé, d'une texture si fine que des reflets irisés y miroitaient comme sur une surface de nacre. (...)

“S'il vous plaît, monsieur”, **dit** Glück d'une voix un peu hésitante, “étiez-vous ma chope?”

A ces mots, le petit homme **fit** vivement volte-face et **vint** se planter devant Glück en se redressant de toute sa hauteur. “Je suis, **déclara** le petit homme, le Roi de la Rivière d'Or.”

(Ruskin, J., *Le roi de la rivière d'or*, Paris, Bordas, 1980, 38-41)

The different verbs relevant for the demonstration are in **bold**. What should be noted is the following : although the last sentence of the first paragraph introduces the evolved referent (it is no longer a cup, but a small golden dwarf), it is not the last phase of the narrative sequence. This contrasts with the two other configurations : in configurations 2 and 3, the stative predicate or the achievement

predicate, respectively the *imparfait* and the *plus-que-parfait*, makes a narrative closure<sup>8</sup>.

Second, in configuration<sup>1</sup>, the change of state of the referent implies no mention of the first entity, unlike configurations<sup>2</sup> and 3. If we compare these three configurations, we obtain the following referential chains :

- for configuration 1 :

(29i) un petit nain doré, le nain, il, le, le nain, vous, ma chope, le petit homme,  
le petit homme, le Roi de la Rivière d'Or<sup>9</sup>

- for configuration 2 :

(4i) il, (le) petit garçon, un vieil homme à longue barbe  
(22i) une dame âgée aux cheveux déjà grisonnants, une gamine en jupes  
courtes

- for configuration 3 :

(24i) le nain, sa silhouette, il, le monarque  
(25i) le chien, le chien, le Roi de la Rivière d'Or, le monarque

In configurations 2 and 3, reference is made to both states of the referent in the chain : before the change and after the change. For instance, in (4), before the change, we have a little boy, and after the change an old man with a long beard (*idem* for (22) and (25)). Example (24) seems similar to the first configuration : reference is made only to the first state of the referent. But in this case, there is a very simple explanation : the result of the process of change is *nothing*, since the dwarf has evaporated !

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8 I use the term *narrative closure* in an *ad hoc* way, restricted to the problem of evolving reference: a narrative closure is marked by the event, state or achievement indicating the result of the transformation process affected by an entity X from the shape Y to the shape Z.

9 The referential expressions *vous* and *ma chope* (in the sentence *Etiez-vous ma chope?*) raise a different problem, which is the maintenance of identity throughout time. Cf. § 5 for a discussion and a development of this aspect of evolving reference. See also Reboul (here).

Thus we have good reason to suppose that configuration1, the most predictable in terms of temporal sequencing, is not the best choice to indicate changes of state in narratives : in configuration1, reference is made, in the last phase, only to the final state of the referent. We should now ask what is the difference between configurations2 and 3, which are characterized by the absence of narrative tenses.

Configuration2 is marked by the *imparfait*, which indicates a resultative state. In terms of referential expressions, we observed that **both expressions referring to the initial and final state** are found. Moreover in both cases the *syntactic markers* are contrastive :

(4ii) *Bientôt, à la place* du petit garçon, il y avait un vieil homme à longue barbe

(22ii) *bientôt* elle n'était plus **une dame âgée aux cheveux déjà grisonnants, mais une gamine en jupes courtes**, avec, dans le dos, une longue natte de cheveux couleur de lin.

The expression *à la place de* (instead of), and the *mais<sub>SN</sub>* (but) construction (cf. Anscombe & Ducrot 1977) introduce a semantic effect of contrast between both states of the referents. Moreover, as the change of state is a temporal process, it is described as a brief process (*bientôt* - soon). The specific pragmatic effect linked to the point of view expressed by *bientôt* should be noted here. The paradox is that *bientôt* conveys a particular point of view : the whole change is perceived from the point of view of the initial state. This is paradoxical, because the point of view imposed by *bientôt* implies that the resultative state is something which is prospective relative to the initial state. A similar explanation with regard to the notion of *internal focalisation* is given below.

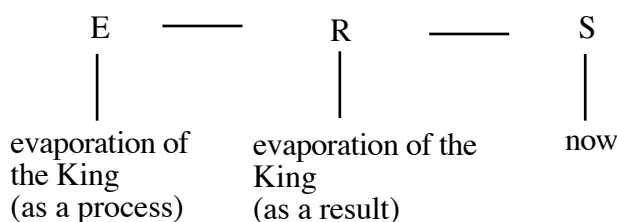
Configuration 3 is marked by the *plus-que-parfait* and introduces the result of the process, as an achievement. Strictly speaking, the previous analysis of this configuration is inadequate : the only expression in the configuration is the initial state. In (24), as the dwarf has evaporated, he cannot be referred to by anything, but in the configuration in (25), no contrast appears : the contrast is outside the

configuration, and is an explicature of the resultative achievement. Thus, rather than (25i), we should have (25ii) :

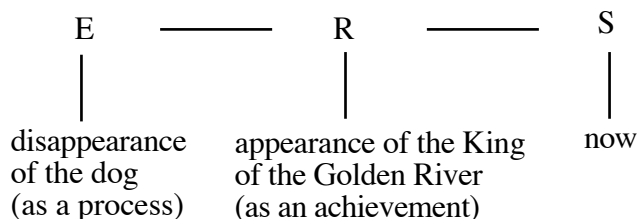
(25ii) le chien, le chien

What characterises this configuration ? If we take the standard analysis of the pluperfect by Reichenbach (1947) or Dowty (1986), the event point (E) is described from the reference point (R) posterior to E, whereas E and R both precede the speech point S (E–R–S in Reichenbach's notation). If we take examples (24) and (25), we get the following analyses :

(24ii)



(25iii)



In other words, the situation, that is, the resultative state, is represented from a point in time where the initial state is no longer the case, but which supposes a change of state. Thus we have here a double reference : to the resulting state and to the initial state. What could have seemed anomalous in the use of the *plus-que-parfait* appears in fact as a very relevant and appropriate way of expressing evolving reference; change is implicated, and the initial state is referred to.

If we try to sum up our observations so far, we can describe the three configurations obtained in terms of the following classification :

	<b>configuration1</b>	<b>configuration2</b>	<b>configuration3</b>
<b>tense</b>	passé simple	imparfait	plus-que-parfait
retrospective perspective	–	–	+
stative description	–	+	–
temporal sequencing	+	–	–
contrast	–	+	–
marked point of view	–	+	+
change of state	+	+	+

Figure 2

One property of these three configurations has not yet been described : the presence of a point of view expressed or implied in the configuration. In figure 2, the only unmarked configuration, from the perspective of point of view, is the narrative configuration (configuration1). This is not surprising, but must be explained. The following description provides another argument for the marked status of the first configuration in the context of evolving reference.

The question is what type of focalisation each configuration belongs to. Let us state the following hypotheses :

(i) *Configuration 1 is typically non-focalised* : in (23) and (29), the scene is perceived from a point of view which it is not relevant to determine, that is, which has no influence on the interpretation of the sentence; we could imagine that Glück is the center of perception, but this is not absolutely necessary.

(ii) Configuration2 is focalised and is similar to the classical counter-example to aspectual and anaphoric theses of the *imparfait* given in (9) (cf. Sthioul 1995)□

(9) Max alluma une cigarette. Le tabac avait un goût de miel.

(Max lit a cigarette. The tobacco had a honey flavour.)

The question is whether the focalisation is internal or external. Example (22) shows that focalisation must be internal : the centre of perspective is the character

referred to by the third person pronoun (*elle*), as the constructions with the *conditional* and the *imparfait* shows :

- (22iii) elle n'aurait pas cru...  
elle se sentait rajeunir...

Yet, example (4) is difficult to interpret as internally focalised. The locative adverbial *à la place du petit garçon* implies that the scene is perceived from the perspective of a neutral observer, whom the reader can identify to. So *configuration 2 represents both cases of internal and external focalisation*.

(iii) Configuration 3, like configuration 2, is focalised. But the types of descriptions, repeated in (24iii) and in (25iv), suppose a centre of perspective which is external to the third person who is being talked about :

- (24iii) sa silhouette se fit indistincte  
les couleurs devinrent une vapeur irisée de lumière nacrée  
il demeura nimbé de ces reflets comme un arc-en-ciel  
les couleurs pâlirent  
le voile de brume se dissipa
- (25iv) sa queue disparut  
ses oreilles se mirent à allonger  
elles devinrent soyeuses, dorées  
son nez prit un ton extrêmement rouge  
ses yeux clignotèrent de malice

All these expressions imply a centre of perception, who perceives and interprets the change of state occurring in front of him. The easiest interpretation is to localise this centre of perception in the reader.<sup>10</sup> Thus *configuration 3 belongs to external focalisation*.

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<sup>10</sup> In the perspective of Vuillaume (1990) and (1993), we could say that we have here a case where the secondary fiction is mapping the principal fiction. The principal fiction refers to the events endured by the characters described in the third person, whereas the secondary fiction has as heroes the narrator and the reader. See Fauconnier (1984) for a similar treatment of narrative examples in the framework of his theory of mental states.

We have now a much better argument than the argument of temporal order to explain why configuration1 is the marked case : *configuration1 is marked because it is not focalised*. So, the type of process implied by evolving reference in narratives has much greater effects when focalised. Focalisation, either internal or external, is clearly a matter of relevance, as described in relevance theory (see Moeschler & Reboul 1994, and Reboul 1992 for an analysis of represented speech and thought within relevance theory). Typically, a focalised utterance which implies that a state of affairs is represented from a particular point of view is a way of introducing *subjectivity* and *consciousness* in the use of language. If relevance is a balance between cognitive effort and cognitive effects, the main effect of a focalised utterance is *identification* (cf. Reboul 1992). Therefore, a non focalised narrative utterance is less relevant : it implies no specific cognitive effect due to a particular point of view. More generally, the thesis which underlies my statement is that the interpretive use of language is a very efficient way of achieving relevance. And focalised utterances, like irony, are interpretive uses of language.

#### **4. Narrative configuration and temporal sequencing**

The question I address now concerns the relation between temporal sequencing and the three types of narrative configurations in which evolving reference occurs. The analysis of temporal sequencing may have, as in Figure 1, different solutions : the anaphoric solution, the aspectual solution, the classical Gricean solution, the neo-Gricean solution and the relevance solution. The analyses of narrative configurations for evolving reference showed that configurations were marked by tenses, aspectual classes and points of view. What I would propose now is a general explanation of the sequencing problem, narrative configurations in evolving reference, and focalisation.

First, let us take the three types of narrative configuration in evolving reference. Which type of solution to the sequencing problem would make the correct prediction? If we look at the code model solutions, both of them will make false predictions.

(i) The anaphoric solution explains configuration1, because of the occurrence of the *passé simple* in the final phase, but is unable to explain configurations2 and 3, in which time advances despite the use of non-narrative tenses (respectively *imparfait* and *plus-que-parfait*), which should predict that time does not advance.

(ii) The aspectual solution makes the same incorrect predictions : only configuration1 is compatible with the temporal discourse interpretation principle and the generalisation on aspectual classes (*passé simple* makes time advance); configuration2 satisfies the principle of narrative discourse, but not the generalisation on aspectual classes (stative predicates at the *imparfait* should make temporal reference overlap the last event referred to); finally, configuration3 satisfies both the principle and the aspectual classes generalisation, but contradicts the semantics of the *plus-que-parfait* (time advances with an achievement verb, but the event point should be anterior rather posterior to the reference point).

If the code solutions are unsatisfactory, what about the inferential solutions?

(iii) The implicature solutions raise the following problems. The classical Gricean and the neo-Gricean solutions say nothing about sequencing with statives, that is, sequencing of non-narrative sentences. The only information given by these solutions is “move time in narrative sentences”. No linguistic or pragmatic constraints are expressed to rule out temporal interpretations, as no pragmatic principle explains what happens in the non standard configurations 2 and 3.

(iv) Hence, the only choice seems to be the relevance solution, because it is more neutral as far as the relation between linguistic encoding and pragmatic inference

is concerned. I assume that verbal tenses are procedural expressions that give instructions on how to interpret utterances. In other words, I assume that verbal tenses do not simply function as indicating what the temporal reference is, but also give information about the context needed to interpret the utterance in order to convey an interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance.<sup>11</sup>

In the last paragraph (cf. Figure 2), we saw that what distinguishes the three types of narrative configurations is a multiple range of parameters : some linguistic, others pragmatic. One of the pragmatic parameters is focalisation. The question is whether there is a direct relation between tense marking and focalisation. Unfortunately, there is no yes/no answer to that question. In order to give a consistent answer, we must have a closer look at tenses as procedural markers. The hypothesis developed by Sthioul (1995) and Luscher & Sthioul (1996) provides the answer we need. Following Smith (1990 and 1993), Sthioul distinguishes two uses of a tense like *imparfait*. First, a descriptive use, in which the propositional form of an utterance using the *imparfait* is the interpretation of a thought of the speaker which is a description of a real state of affairs. This case corresponds to the anaphoric use of the *imparfait*, which is not focalised. By contrast, focalised uses of the *imparfait*, which are either internal or external focalisations, are interpretive uses : the propositional form of an utterance using the *imparfait* is thus an interpretation of a speaker's thought which is an interpretation of an attributed thought, either to a character (internal focalisation) or to another centre of perception (an external focaliser which is neither the narrator nor a third person).

Thus we have a new approach to tenses in narrative with regard to evolving reference : the uses of the *imparfait* and of the *plus-que-parfait* are interpretive uses, corresponding to either internal or external focalisations. The interpretive and focalised uses of these tenses explain why temporal sequencing is

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11 An interpretation is said to be *consistent with the principle of relevance* iff (i) it is the first that comes to the hearer's mind which balances the cognitive effort needed to process the utterance, and (ii) it is an interpretation the hearer can reasonably presume to correspond to the speaker's communicative intention.

maintained in the absence of any narrative tense. What they express is not a situation overlapping an event, but a resultative state or achievement.

If we have provided a general explanation of temporal sequencing in narratives within evolving reference, using concepts such as *focalisation* and *interpretive use*, we have not yet developed a theory of reference. What we should expect is a strong implicational relationship between these configurations and the type of referential expressions appearing in the result phase. This is the point of the final section.

### **5. Reference with indefinite descriptions**

First, I would like to examine how the change of state is introduced with a new referential expression. Consider the referring expressions of examples (4), (22), (23) and (25) which introduce the new state of the referent<sup>12</sup> :

(30) un vieil homme à longue barbe (4)

(31) une gamine en jupes courtes, avec, dans le dos, une longue natte de cheveux couleur de lin (22)

(32) un petit nain doré, d'environ un pied et demi de haut (23)

(33) une vieille connaissance, le Roi de la Rivière d'Or

These data lead to the following conclusion : the changes of state in these examples are such that the new state of the referent must be introduced by an indefinite description. But why is this the case? Before answering this question, let us make the following observations :

(i) Indefinite descriptions here are complete (cf. Moeschler & Reboul 1994, chapters 4 and 13), that is, need not refer back to a linguistic antecedent to obtain reference; they are, in Milner's terms (cf. Milner 1982), referentially autonomous.

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<sup>12</sup> We have observed that example (24) does not imply a transformed state for the referent, since the king has evaporated.

(ii) Indefinite descriptions here are used attributively, and not referentially (cf. Donnellan 1971), i.e. what is referred to is “such and such”.

(iii) The autonomous and attributive properties of indefinite descriptions should be contradictory to the coreference implied by evolving reference : although the individual has changed in shape and sort, he remains the same; this paradoxical aspect of coreference is illustrated by (22), as the two states of the referent (initial and final) are introduced by indefinite descriptions, which are coreferential to the pronoun *elle* :

(34) (elle)<sub>i</sub>, (une dame âgées aux cheveux déjà grisonnants)<sub>i</sub>, (une gamine en jupes courtes, avec, dans le dos, une longue natte de cheveux couleur de lin)<sub>i</sub>

(iv) If we look at the continuation of (4), given here as (35), we face a new problem :

(35) **Il** dessina donc un cercle autour de lui avec un grand bâton, respira trois fois profondément et lut une des formules magiques du livre. Bientôt, à la place **du petit garçon**, il y avait **un vieil homme à longue barbe**.

**Jack** portait toujours **ses** habits de petit garçon, alors **il** récita une autre formule pour les changer en haillons. Comme cela, si son oncle et sa tante passaient par là, ils ne **le** reconnaîtraient pas.

Graves, R., *Le grand livre vert*, Paris, Gallimard, 1979.

All the following expressions are coreferential :

(36) (il)<sub>i</sub>, (le petit garçon)<sub>i</sub>, (un vieil homme à longue barbe)<sub>i</sub>, (Jack)<sub>i</sub>, (il)<sub>i</sub>, (le)<sub>i</sub>

But here, if Jack is the old man, how is it possible that in *ses habits*, reference is made to Jack's clothes, and that *son oncle* and *sa tante* refer to Jack's uncle and aunt ? Moreover, if *Jack* had been replaced by *il*, what would have been the referent : Jack or the old man ? To make the point more explicitly, I would like to discuss an example similar to (35), which is an extract from (29). The utterance

is an identity sentence (of the logical structure  $a = b$ ) whose identity is made possible because of a temporal operator (*imparfait*) :

(37) Etiez-vous ma chope ?

This example implies two descriptions of the same referent, the difference being a temporal one. Schematically, we have the following situation :

(37')    Etiez-vous    ma chope?  
                  |        |  
                   $t_0$          $t_i < t_0$

In other words, the description *vous* denotes the dwarf at  $t_0$ , and *la chope* a description of the same individual at  $t_i < t_0$ . Thus we have the following logical form :

(37'')     $\exists x \exists t (vous(x, t_0) \wedge ma\ chope(x, t < t_0))$

This should not sound odd : a sentence such as (37) is an identity statement affected by time. But it is odd, and the situation described in (37), in which the same referent is described by two non compatible referring expressions at different times, seems to be rather exceptional.

Let us look at another case of evolving within narratives. In (38), the underlying subject (by conjunction reduction) is *the girl*; but the linguistic context implies that she is *a peahen*. (39) shows that if we use a nominal anaphor, *the peahen* is a better subject than *the girl* for the second conjunct :

(38) Before midnight he awoke and looked up at the tree and saw how the apples ripened, and how the whole palace was lit up by their shining. At that minute nine peahens flew towards the tree, and eight of them settled on its branches, but the ninth alighted near him and turned instantly into a beautiful girl - so beautiful, indeed, that the whole kingdom could not produce one who could in any way compare with her. She stayed, conversing kindly with him, till after midnight, then, thanking him for the golden apples, she prepared to depart; but, as he begged she would leave him one, she gave him two, one for himself and

one for the king his father. Then **the girl** turned again into **a peahen**, and flew away with the other eight.

Rackham, A., *Fairy tales from many lands*,  
London, Piccolo, 1916, 100.

- (39) a. ? Then **the girl<sub>i</sub>** turned again into **a peahen**, and **the girl<sub>i</sub>** flew away with the other eight.  
 b. Then **the girl** turned again into **a peahen<sub>i</sub>**, and **the peahen<sub>i</sub>** flew away with the other eight.

What conclusions can we draw from these identity statements within evolving reference ? First, if a change has occurred, it must be introduced by an autonomous and indefinite description. Second, the indefinite description may, but does not have to be the antecedent for the posterior referential expression (cf. (35)).

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed an account of evolving reference based on an analysis of temporal sequencing in narratives. I have shown that evolving reference within narrative contexts adopts mainly three configurations, and that these configurations are explained by pragmatic aspects of tenses and narratives (respectively interpretive uses and focalisation). I have also proposed a hypothesis to explain the distribution of referential expressions in the final phase of evolving reference within narrative discourse. The explanation is based on the hypothesis that reference is made *via* an autonomous, complete and indefinite expression.

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