

Discourse properties of the Perfect and related tenses in French, English and Dutch

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1. The cross-linguistic analysis of the perfect at the discourse level

In a recent article (de Swart and Molendijk 2000), we raise the question how one can tell a story in the French Passé Composé (PC), whereas this is impossible in its English counterpart the Present Perfect (PP) or its Dutch counterpart the *Voltooid Tegenwoordige Tijd* (VTT). Our starting point is a contrastive analysis of the perfect in these three languages. We claim that they all support the Reichenbachian schema E-R,S, and that differences between the three languages in their ability to combine with locative adverbials or to occur in narrative contexts are due to additional constraints on the PP and the VTT, but not on the PC. The claim that the time of reference R coincides with the speech time S implies that the perspective is at S. The conclusion we draw is that the PC does not contribute to the development of the temporal structure of the discourse. An author who uses the PC is therefore obliged to use other means to indicate narrative structure. We point to the role of adverbs that indicate progress in time (*puis, ensuite, un moment après*), to the lexical contribution of expressions which refer to time going by (*la nuit a passé, nous sommes restés un long moment ainsi*, etc.), to the contribution of transitional verbs (presuppositions and implications of verbs like *entrer, sortir, ajouter*, etc.) and to the rhetorical structure of the text (discourse relation of strong narration or "occasion" and scenarios like getting up in the morning, preparing dinner, etc.). The essential features of our analysis are summarized in section 2.

In this paper, we would like to study the implications of the contrastive analysis of the perfect in English, French and Dutch for the temporal structure of the text in the three languages. Although there are other approaches one might take, we choose the means of translation. In de Swart and Molendijk (2000), we develop a rather detailed analysis of the temporal structure of the first two chapters of *L'étranger* by Camus, as an example of a text that is based on the narrative PC. Given that we claim that the PP and the VTT are not used to tell a story, one of the questions which our analysis raises is how the specific temporal organisation of this text is expressed in a Dutch or English translation.

Our first hypothesis was that the English translation would never use the Present Perfect, but would transpose the whole story into the Simple Past (SP). The Dutch translation would use a mixture of the VTT and the *Onvoltooid Verleden Tijd* (OVT), which is the counterpart to the English Simple Past. The stronger the deictic character of the PC in the French original, the higher the chance that the translator would use a VTT in Dutch. For the more narrative flavored uses of the PC, the translator would preferably use the OVT in Dutch. Section 3 will show that this hypothesis is confirmed by the translations we examined.

The second hypothesis was that the English and Dutch translations would make less use of means that impose temporal structuring, such as time adverbials, because the SP and the OVT are the default narrative tenses of the language, and they don't need support from

other mechanisms to move time forward. This hypothesis was not confirmed by the translations we examined. There are several ways to explain our findings, and they are discussed in section 4.

2. A contrastive analysis of the perfect

2.1 Semantic rules for the perfect in English, French and Dutch

In order to account for the difference between the SP in (1a) and the PP in the English examples (1b), linguists often appeal to Reichenbach's (1947) analysis:

- (1) a. Sara left the party.
b. Sara has left the party.

In (1a) as well as in (1b), the event E of Sara's departure is located before the speech time S on the time axis. The main difference between the two sentences is that (1b) does not only look at the past, but maintains the importance of S. (1b) tells us that Sara left with the result that she is not at the party at the moment, whereas (1a) only reports the leaving. In order to capture this difference in perspective, Reichenbach (1947) introduces the notion of reference time R. In the case of the SP, R coincides with E, which yields the structure E,R-S: the event E coincides with (,) the reference time R, which precedes (-) the speech time S. For the PP, Reichenbach proposes the schema E-R,S, such that E precedes the reference time R, which coincides with the speech time S.

The Reichenbachian structure E-R,S has been used to explain various properties of the English Present Perfect. The observation that the PP is generally incompatible with adverbs that locate the event E in time (2a) has been related to the claim that locating time adverbials modify R, rather than E. Given that R coincides with S, we expect the Present Perfect to be compatible with deictic adverbials only, which seems to be confirmed by the contrast between (2a) and (2b):

- (2) a. *Sara has left at six o'clock.
b. Sara has left this afternoon.

Furthermore, we expect the PP to be an inappropriate tense to tell a story, for narrative contexts require the perspective to shift to the sequence of events, rather than to stay at S. Boo-gaart (1999) proposes to use the occurrence of a tense in a subordinate clause introduced by *when* as a criterion for narrative use. The observation that the PP cannot be used in this context (3a), whereas the SP can (3b) confirms that the former is not a narrative tense, but the latter is:

- (3) a. *When John has seen (PP) me, he has got (PP)/got (SP) frightened.
b. When John saw (SP) me, he got (SP) frightened.

At first sight, the fact that the Reichenbachian analysis of the English Present Perfect might be taken to explain the restrictions of this tense on locating time adverbials and its infelicitous use in narrative contexts is a nice result. However, the analysis raises problems for other cases. It is well known that the Pluperfect combines with locating time adverbials which can either modify the reference time R or the event time E, cf. the ambiguous (4):

- (4) Sara had left at six o'clock
 a. At six o'clock, Sara had already left.
 b. (At some point in time it became clear that) Sara had left at six o'clock.

Also, the Past Perfect is easily used in narrative contexts such as *when*-clauses:

- (5) When John had crossed the street, he entered a shoe store.

One way of getting around the problem of the Pluperfect is to assume that this tense is ambiguous between a perfect in the past and a past in the past (cf. Kamp and Reyle 1993: 598-601). Although this is a perfectly legitimate solution to the problem, it implies that the strong interpretation of the Reichenbachian analysis for English is not supported by other perfect tenses besides the Present Perfect. Independent evidence in favor of the claims made so far might come from a cross-linguistic analysis of the perfect. However, our study of the Dutch and French counterparts of the Present Perfect shows that the VTT and the PC easily combine with locating time adverbials, as illustrated in (6a) and (b), which are literal translations of (2a):

- (6) a. Sara is om zes uur vertrokken. [Dutch]
 b. Sara est partie à six heures. [French]

Furthermore, the French PC freely occurs in subordinate clauses introduced by *toen* ('when'), but its English and Dutch counterparts do not, compare (3a) and (7a) with (7b):

- (7) a. *Toen Jan me heeft gezien (VTT) is hij bang geworden (VTT)/
 werd (OVT) hij bang. [Dutch]
 b. Quand Jean m'a vu (PC), il a eu peur (PC). [French]

There are two ways we can go about these cross-linguistic differences. We might assume that Dutch and French are exceptional, and the English PP is the only tense that provides a perfect illustration of the Reichenbachian schema E-R,S. Thus Vet (1992, 1999) proposes that the French PC is ambiguous between a present perfect and a simple past tense.¹ The other option is that we maintain the characterization of the Dutch VTT and the French PC as perfects which obey the Reichenbachian schema E-R,S, and find an alternative explanation of the restrictions that various languages impose on the compatibility with time adverbials and the narrative usage of the tense. In de Swart and Molendijk (2000), we opt for the second solution. We assume that all three tenses are instantiations of the Reichenbachian perfect schema E-R,S, but the Dutch and English tenses are subject to additional constraints. The English PP blocks any temporal relation whatsoever with the event time E. The Dutch VTT resists temporal relations between E and other eventualities (but not other times, as indicated e.g. by time adverbials). The French PC is not subject to any further constraints, which guarantees that it freely combines with time adverbials and occurs in narrative contexts. However, it remains a perfect in the sense that the event in the past is viewed from the speech time S. Accordingly, we propose the following semantic rules for the perfect in English, Dutch and French:

¹ Note that Vet (to appear) weakens his position to polysemy, and thereby comes closer to the analysis developed by de Swart and Molendijk (2000).

- (8) Semantics of the English PP
- (i) E-R,S
 - (ii) $\neg E@X$ where @ is any temporal relation, and X is a moment other than R or S, or an event.
- (9) Semantics of the Dutch VTT
- (i) E-R,S
 - (ii) $\neg E@X$ where @ is any temporal relation, and X is an event.
- (10) Semantics of the French PC
- (i) E-R,S

These rules allow us to maintain the Reichenbachian schema for the perfect in all three languages. They give a weak interpretation of the Reichenbachian analysis in which the restrictions on the English PP do not follow from the schema E-R,S itself, but are formulated as additional constraints on the tense form. This allows counterparts of the Present Perfect in other languages to be less constrained perfects. Independent support for this view comes from an analysis of the English, Dutch and French Pluperfect. For all these tenses, we can maintain the traditional Reichenbachian schema E-R-S. Without any further constraints, we would then derive the properties of the English Pluperfect illustrated in (4) and (5) above. Thus we don't need to posit an ambiguity between perfect in the past and past in the past. We will not elaborate this point, but concentrate on the cross-linguistic analysis of the Present Perfect.

2.2 The aspectual nature of the perfect

The Reichenbachian schema of the perfect focusses on the temporal location of the eventuality, and of the reference time, the time from which the eventuality is viewed. It does not say anything about the aspectual nature of the perfect. A more aspectually oriented definition of the perfect has been proposed by Kamp and Reyle (1993), and adopted by de Swart (1998) and others. This definition is tense neutral (it generalizes over the present, past and future perfect), and it assumes that the perfect operates on an eventuality *e* and introduces the result state *s* of that eventuality as immediately following *e*. The notation is $e \supset\subset s$, which means that *e* and *s* "abut", i.e. they touch on the time axis (so there is no temporal "gap" between them), but they do not overlap. It is the result state that is located in time by the tense operator (present, past or future), so this analysis confirms that the perspective on the event reported in the present perfect remains at the speech time S. As pointed out by de Swart (2000), this definition requires the perfect to operate on a quantized event. Without a final boundary on the event, it is impossible to define the consequent state, so the perfect must presuppose a non-homogeneous eventuality. It is this property which allows the perfect in many languages to grammaticalize into a perfective operator (cf. Bybee et al. 1994). Although we do not support the claim that the narrative PC in French is a perfective past (contra Vet 1992, 1999), we do assume that a sentence reported in the PC describes a quantized event. If the predicate which the perfect operates on is eventlike, the definition proceeds as usual. If the predicate is inherently homogeneous (a state or a process), we can turn it into a quantized event by means of coercion (cf. de Swart 2000 for details). In cases like (11a) and (b) for instance, it is easy to reinterpret the state or the process respectively as having a beginning and an endpoint. The introduction of boundaries is sufficient to guarantee the quantized nature of the eventuality:

- (11) a. J'ai été malade.
 b. Il a plu.

(11a) is typically used in contexts in which the speaker fell ill, was ill for a while and then recovered. The bounded state is the input to the perfect, which tells us that the result state of the speaker not being ill anymore is valid at the speech time. Similarly, (11b) is appropriate in a situation where the streets are wet, but it is not raining anymore. Our aspectual characterization of the perfect has consequences for the discourse behavior of the PC in French. Given that we treat the PC as a perfect tense, sentences in the PC always locate a quantized event in the past of the speech time. At the discourse level, sentences in the PC alternate with sentences in the *Imparfait*, which describe unbounded states or processes (cf. de Swart 1998). If the translations into English and Dutch use simple past tenses (the Simple Past or the *Onvoltooid Verleden Tijd*), this aspectual alternation cannot always be preserved. We will illustrate the differences between the three languages under consideration by studying not only the discourse behavior of the PC in *L'étranger*, but also the way it is translated into Dutch and English.²

3 Discourse behavior of the perfect in English, French and Dutch

3.1 The hypothesis

As far as the discourse behavior of the PC is concerned, we observe that any temporal relation can be established between two sentences in the PC: posteriority, overlap/inclusion, temporal inversion (cf. de Swart and Molendijk 2000). Given that the PC imposes no particular temporal structure, we assume that the PC does not induce rhetorical structure. This is to be contrasted with a narrative past tense like the *Passé Simple* (PS), which is compatible with a number of rhetorical relations (cf. Molendijk and de Swart 1999 for discussion), and which forces the reader to choose one. According to Bras, Le Draoulec and Vieu (2000, 2001), Narration, and thus temporal succession is the preferred option unless something more specific comes up. Unlike the PS then, the PC is not a narrative tense. The main difference with its English and Dutch counterparts is that it does not resist narration. As a consequence, it is a more liberal tense than the PP or the VTT, but it makes a temporal contribution that is much weaker than that of the PS. In de Swart and Molendijk (2000), we develop an analysis of the temporal structure of *L'étranger* by Camus which confirms that a story told in the PC needs support from time adverbials, lexical semantics and rhetorical structure in order to create the necessary progress in time for the story to unfold.

Given that the Dutch VTT and the English PP block temporal relations between eventualities, they are incompatible with narrative structure. The English PP is even more restricted, because it does not even allow locating time adverbials. The contrastive analysis developed by de Swart and Molendijk (2000) makes straightforward predictions as to the tense forms used in translations of a French original told in the PC. The English translation might use an occasional PP, e.g. in an opening sentence which connects the events being told to the time of the telling. But the preferred option is to use the SP throughout, for the PP resists narration. The Dutch translation will use some VTTs, especially in contexts which emphasize the deictic character of the French PC. The use of the OVT is required in more narrative parts,

² In this paper, we use the following editions for reference:

A. Camus (1957). *L'étranger*, collection Folio, Gallimard.

A. Camus. *The outsider*, Penguin Books 1982. Translated from the French by Joseph Laredo.

A. Camus. *De vreemdeling*, De Bezige Bij 1998. Translated from the French by Adriaan Morriën.

where a sequence of events is related in a rhetorical structure. These predictions are confirmed by the Dutch and English translations that we have studied. In the following sections, this will be illustrated with examples.

3.2 Deictic adverbials and the perfect

From observations made by de Swart and Molendijk (2000), we know that *L'étranger* contains quite a few deictic adverbials of the type *aujourd'hui*, *hier*, etc, which confirm the claim that the perspective of the PC is located at the speech time. Given that the French PC and the Dutch VTT can establish temporal relations with other times, but the English PP cannot, we predict that the Dutch translator maintains the VTT when the sentence contains a deictic adverbial, but the English translator does not. This prediction is verified by the translations examined.

- (12) a. Aujourd'hui, maman est morte (PC). Ou peut-être hier, je ne sais pas (PR). J'ai reçu un télégramme de l'asile (PC): (...) p. 9
 b. Mother died today (SP). Or maybe yesterday, I don't know (PR). I had a telegram from the home (SP): (...) p. 9
 c. Vandaag is moeder gestorven (VTT). Of misschien gisteren, ik weet het niet (OTT). Ik ontving een telegram uit het gesticht (OVT): (...) p. 63

(12a) illustrates that the French PC is compatible with a deictic adverbial like *aujourd'hui* ('today'). The English PP sometimes allows a deictic adverbial, but the time span needs to be shorter than a day, so *today* requires the use of the SP in (12b). The Dutch VTT is compatible with the deictic adverbial *vandaag*, so this makes it possible to have a translation that remains closer to the French original. The alternation between PC and Présent in (12a) emphasizes the connection with the moment of speech, and confirms that the perspective of the PC remains in the present. In the English translation (12b) the alternation between SP and Present seems to indicate switching perspectives. Although the opening sentence of the Dutch translation (12c) is in the VTT, which is followed by a sentence in the Onvoltooid Tegenwoordige Tijd (OTT), the third sentence is in the OVT, the standard narrative past tense in Dutch.

3.3 Maintaining the aspectual nature of the original

Camus uses the PC to report quantized events that took place in the past, or bounded states/processes. This use fits the view of the aspectual nature of the perfect sketched in section 2.2 above. Open ended states and processes are reported in the IMP. (13a) illustrates the standard alternation between PC and IMP in *L'étranger*:

- (13) a. (...) j'ai regardé l'infirmière (PC) et j'ai vu (PC) qu'elle portait (IMP) sous les yeux un bandeau qui faisait le tour de la tête (IMP). A la hauteur du nez, le bandeau était plat (IMP). p. 15
 b. (...) so I looked at the nurse (SP) and saw (SP) that she had a bandage round her head just below the eyes (SP). Where her nose should have been (COND), the bandage was flat (SP). p. 12
 c. Omdat ik hem niet begreep (OVT) keek ik naar de verpleegster (OVT) en zag dat zij onder haar ogen een verband droeg (OVT), dat om haar hoofd was geknoopt (OVT). Ter hoogte van de neuzen was het verband vlak (OVT). Van

haar gezicht was alleen maar dat witte verband te zien (OVT).

The aspectual alternation between PC and IMP cannot be translated by means of tenses in either Dutch or English. In English, both tenses are normally translated by the Simple Past.³ Instead of grammatical aspect, English typically uses “lexical” aspect to convey the same effect: sentences in the PC are typically translated by dynamic, active, eventlike verbs, sentences in the IMP are typically translated by stative, passive or processlike verb.⁴ If we assume with de Swart (1998) that the English simple past is aspectually transparent in the sense of letting the lexical aspect “shine through” at the sentence level, we can explain why the temporal structure in the English translation is roughly equivalent to the French original. As pointed out by Boogaart (1999), the Dutch OVT is more flexible than the English SP, because of the absence of a grammaticalized progressive construction. This means that inherently quantized predicates can be presented as either quantized or non-quantized by the OVT. However, inherently homogeneous predicates tend to be presented as such by the OVT. This means that we globally see the same translation strategy in Dutch as in English: sentences in the PC are translated by means of dynamic predicates, sentences in the IMP are translated by means of stative predicates.

The examples in (13) represent the default cases in which the French original uses an eventlike predicate in the PC and a state/process in the IMP. In these default cases, the English and Dutch translations achieve the same result by simply respecting the lexical semantics of the verb. In cases where the French original obtains the quantized effect of the sentence in the PC by means of coercion of an inherently homogeneous predicate (a state or a process), along the lines of example (11), the translator is faced with a problem. If the English SP is indeed aspectually transparent, it cannot be a trigger for coercion. De Swart (1998, 2000) argues that coercion does not apply at random, but must be triggered by a lexical or grammatical operator. So in the absence of a counterpart to the PC, English has to adopt a different strategy. One option for the English translator is to create the quantized effect by using a time adverbial that imposes boundaries on the homogeneous state/process. This strategy is close to the original PC, the only difference being that the PC implicitly imposes boundaries, whereas the time adverbial makes them explicit. The following example illustrates this translation strategy:

- (14) a. Nous avons tous pris du café, servi par le concierge (PC). Ensuite, je ne sais plus (PR). La nuit a passé (PC). Je me souviens (PC) qu'à un certain moment j'ai ouvert les yeux (PC) et j'ai vu (PC) que les vieillards dormaient (IMP) (...). Puis j'ai encore dormi (PC). p. 21
- b. The caretaker served us all some coffee (SP). After that I don't know (PR) what happened (SP). The night passed (SP). I remember (PR) opening my eyes at one point and seeing all the old people slumped forward in sleep (SP) (...). Then I slept some more (SP). p. 17
- c. Wij dronken allen koffie (OVT) die door de concierge was rondgediend (OVT). Van hetgeen daarna gebeurde (OVT) weet ik niets meer (OTT). De nacht ging voorbij (OVT). Ik herinner mij (OVT) dat ik op een gegeven ogenblik mijn ogen opendeed (OVT) en zag (OVT) dat de oude mensen sliepen (OVT) (...). Daarna heb ik weer geslapen (VTT). p. 71

³ In principle, Imparfais that report actions in progress might be translated by means of the Progressive, but such examples do not occur in the chapters of *L'étranger* studied here.

⁴ Strictly speaking, situation type is not lexical, but is determined at the level of predicate-argument structure, as was first observed by Verkuyl (1972). For the purposes of this paper, the simplification is harmless.

The SP form *slept* would have an unbounded character, and is therefore not appropriate as the translation of a sentence in the PC. A Simple Past is not impossible if we use adverbials to indicate the bounded character of the nap, as in (14b): *Then I slept some more*. The Dutch translation maintains the quantized character of the French original by the use of the VTT (14c) (see below). Obviously, this option is not available to the English translator.

As an alternative, the English translator can look for a dynamic verb which conveys roughly the same meaning as the coerced state/process in the French original. This strategy typically leads to a somewhat more liberal translation, as illustrated in (15):

- (15) a. L'asile est à deux kilomètres du village (PR). J'ai fait le chemin à pied (PC). J'ai voulu voir maman tout de suite (PC). Mais le concierge m'a dit qu'il fallait que je rencontre le directeur (PC). Comme il était occupé (IMP), j'ai attendu un peu (PC). Pendant tout ce temps, le concierge a parlé (PC) et ensuite, j'ai vu le directeur (PC): il m'a reçu dans son bureau (PC). C'est un petit vieux, avec la Légion d'honneur (PR). Il m'a regardé de ses yeux clairs (PC). Puis il m'a serré la main (PC) qu'il a gardée si longtemps (PC) que je ne savais trop comment la retirer (IMP). Il a consulté un dossier (PC) et m'a dit (PC): (...) p. 11
- b. The home is just over a mile from the village (PR). I walked it (SP). I wanted to see mother straight away (SP). But the caretaker told me I had to meet the warden (SP). He was busy (SP), so I waited a bit (SP). The caretaker talked the whole time (SP) and then he showed me into the warden's office (SP). He was a small, elderly man with the Legion of Honour (SP). He looked at me with his bright eyes (SP). Then he shook my hand (SP) and held it for so long (SP) that I didn't quite know how to take it back again (SP). He consulted a file (SP) and told me (SP), (...). p. 10
- c. Het gesticht ligt twee kilometer buiten het dorp (OTT). Ik ben er te voet heengegaan (VTT). Ik wilde moeder meteen zien (OVT). Maar de concierge zei mij dat ik mij eerst bij de directeur moest melden (OVT). Omdat hij bezet was (OVT) moest ik even wachten (OVT). Al die tijd bleef de conciërge praten (OVT), en daarna ben ik bij de directeur geweest (VTT); hij ontving mij in zijn kantoor (OVT). Het is een kleine oude man, met het legioen van eer in zijn knoopsgat (OTT). Hij zag mij met zijn heldere ogen aan (OVT). Daarna schudde hij mij de hand (OVT), die hij zo lang vasthield (OVT) dat ik niet meer wist hoe ik haar terug moest trekken (OVT). Vervolgens keek hij in een map (OVT) en zei (OVT): (...) p. 64

The most literal translation of *il m'a reçu dans son bureau* (15a) would be something like *he received me in his office*. However, the translator opts for a clearly dynamic and quantized verb: *he showed me into the warden's office* (15b).

In principle, the Dutch translator has the same possibilities as the English translator when faced with a sentence in the PC that owes its quantized character to coercion. However, there is a third option, which is to switch to the VTT. In (14) and (15) the choice of the Dutch translator for the VTT in the middle of a series of OVTs is clearly motivated by an attempt to maintain the aspectual character of the French original. Where the English translator in (14b) inserts a bounding time adverbial to reflect the quantized character of the sentence, the Dutch translator switches to the VTT after a series of OVTs: *Daarna heb ik weer geslapen* (14c). The OVT form *sleiep* would describe an unbounded process, but the perfect imposes bounda-

ries on this process, just like the PC does in the French original. The case of *en daarna ben ik bij de directeur geweest* in (15c) is another example. The translator uses a stative verb, namely *zijn* ('to be'). But a sentence with *zijn* in the OVT reports an unbounded state which holds at some point in time in the past. The VTT allows the translator to give the state a bounded character, just like its French counterpart *j'ai vu le directeur* (14a).

In fact, the occasional VTT in Dutch plays a double role. On the one hand, as we have just seen, the bounded character of the perfect can be exploited by the Dutch VTT, and makes it possible to give a translation which remains closer to the French original. On the other hand, the VTT helps the translator to maintain contact with the speech time, just like the French original, even though the whole story cannot be told in the VTT. This is particularly clear from the text in (15). The French original (15a) displays an alternation between PC (for the main events happening), IMP (for background and statives) and PR (for statements which are still true at the moment the protagonist relates the story). The English translation (15b) translates all PCs and IMPs with SPs. Out of the two sentences in the PR in the French original, one is translated with a Present, and the other one with a (stative) SP. The first one, the first sentence of the new paragraph provides general information about the geographical location of the home, and is translated with a PR. The second one, the description of the warden, is related in the PR in French, but is translated with a (stative) SP in English. The effect of this choice in favor of a sequence of tense ("consecutio temporum") construction rather than a Present is that the warden does not really come "alive" outside the context of the story. The choice of the SP for the original PR implies that the translator maintains the perspective of the storyline. As a result, the atmosphere of the novel is quite changed: the series of events becomes "just a story" instead of the alienating, disconnected set of events it is in the French original. The Dutch translation in (15c) tries to steer a middle course between the French original and the English text. Both sentences in the French PR are translated by means of the *Onvoltooid Tegenwoordige tijd* (OTT) in Dutch, and two of the PCs are translated by means of a VTT. All other PCs and IMPs are translated by OVTs, by dynamic/active verbs and stative ones respectively. The sequence of OVTs tends to establish a narrative storyline, but this storyline is broken at regular intervals by a switch of the perspective back to the present, by means of either the OTT or the VTT.

3.4 Temporal structure in the original and in the translation

The switch between OVT and VTT leads the Dutch translator to make parts of the temporal structure explicit which remain hidden in the French original. A prime example is (16):

- (16) a. J'ai pris l'autobus à deux heures (PC). Il faisait très chaud (IMP). J'ai mangé au restaurant, chez Céleste, comme d'habitude (PC). Ils avaient tous beaucoup de peine pour moi (IMP) et Céleste m'a dit (PC): "On n'a qu'une mère" (PR). Quand je suis parti (PC), ils m'ont accompagnés à la porte (PC). J'étais un peu étourdi (IMP) parce qu'il a fallu (PC) que je monte chez Emmanuel pour lui emprunter une cravate noire et un brassard. Il a perdu son oncle, il y a quelques mois (PC).
- J'ai couru pour ne pas manquer le départ (PC) p. 10
- b. I caught the two o'clock bus (SP). It was very hot (SP). I ate at Céleste's restaurant, as usual (SP). They all felt very sorry for me (SP) and Céleste told me (SP), "There's no one like a mother" (PR). When I left (SP), they came to the door with me (SP). I was in a bit of a daze (SP) because I had to go up to

Emmanuel's place to borrow a black tie and armband (SP). He lost his uncle, a few months ago (SP).

I had to run for the bus.

p. 10

- c. Ik heb de autobus van twee uur genomen (VTT). Het was erg warm (OVT). Ik heb in het restaurant, bij Céleste, gegeten zoals gewoonlijk (VTT). Zij hadden allen erg met mij te doen (OVT), en Celeste zei tegen mij (OVT): "Je hebt maar één moeder". Toen ik wegging (OVT) brachten ze mij tot aan de deur (OVT). Ik was een beetje versuft (OVT), omdat ik bij Emmanuel een zwarte das en een rouwband moest gaan lenen (OVT). Hij heeft zijn oom een paar maanden geleden verloren (VTT).

Ik zette het op een lopen om de bus niet te missen (OVT).

p. 64

This fragment is interesting because it contains two instances of temporal inversion. The paragraph opens with the statement that the protagonist took the two o'clock bus. Immediately after the background comment that it was very hot, we learn that the protagonist had lunch at Celeste's restaurant. World knowledge tells us that lunchtime is before two o'clock, so we infer from the French original that the protagonist had lunch before he caught the bus. This is confirmed by the first sentence of the next paragraph, which informs us of the fact that the protagonist almost missed the bus (presumably because of all the delays in the restaurant and the black tie and armband issue). The second temporal inversion is contained within the first one: Emmanuel's loss of his uncle precedes the events in the restaurant. This temporal precedence is made explicit with the time adverbial *il y a quelques mois*, which locates the loss of the uncle in the past of the speech time, but at a much larger distance from the speech time than the events in the restaurant. Although the temporal structure of this fragment is somewhat exceptional, it is fully within the limits of the discourse semantics of the PC that we have provided. Given that the PC is not a narrative tense, all kinds of temporal relations can be established between two sentences in the PC, and the temporal structure we end up with is determined with the help of time adverbials, rhetorical structure and world knowledge. The complexity of this fragment raises interesting problems for the translator.

In the Dutch translation, the VTT is used in both cases to "flag" the change in temporal structure, whereas the intervening sentences use the narrative OVT. As a result, the event of eating in the restaurant is not connected to the taking of the bus in a narrative sequence, and the reader will have to calculate their temporal connection by other means (in this case: world knowledge that lunch is earlier than two o'clock). In the second case, the deictic adverbial *een paar maanden geleden* triggers the VTT, and allows us to calculate the time of the loss from now, rather than from the previous event. The alternation between VTT and OVT makes the change in temporal structure (from non-sequence to narration, back to non-sequence) explicit in a way that the French original does not, because it uses the PC throughout. As a result, the translator captures the temporal structure, but not the "confused" presentation of the sequence of events in the French original. The gain in clarity correlates with a loss of literary effect, but the translator carefully exploits the possibilities of the Dutch tense system.

Lascardes and Asher (1993) argue that the English Simple Past licenses temporal inversion only if there is a causal connection between the two events. General world knowledge does not establish a causal connection between catching the bus and eating in a restaurant, so an inverted reading should not be allowed here. At this point the question arises whether Lascardes and Asher (1993) are on the wrong track, or whether the translation fails. When I showed the fragment to a native speaker, he indicated that the protagonist must have eaten after the bus ride. When I pointed to the first sentence of the next paragraph, he suggested that it

was another bus. When I explained the meaning of the French original, he insisted that such a reading was not available in the English version. We may conclude that the first temporal inversion is not very obvious in the English translation. A Pluperfect might have worked better in this context. We can blame the translator, but note that he is severely restricted by the English tense system. As far as the loss of the uncle is concerned, we obtain the intended temporal inversion because of the presence of the time adverbial *a few months ago*. De Swart (1999) argues that locating time adverbials can be anchored anywhere on the time axis, and are not necessarily later in time than the last event of the discourse (as Kamp and Reyle 1993 assume). This feature of locating time adverbials is clearly exploited by the English translator to obtain the intended temporal inversion structure here.

3.5 Conclusion

We conclude that the contrastive analysis of the perfect in combination with the aspectual analysis of the perfect makes the correct predictions for the translation of *L'étranger* into Dutch and English. The English translation makes exclusive use of the Simple Past, and uses the transparency of this tense as a way to account for the PC/IMP alternation in the French original. In cases where the French sentence in the PC owes its quantized character to coercion, the English translator uses bounding time adverbials or a more dynamic, eventlike verb to obtain the quantized meaning effect. The Dutch translator has the same two possibilities, but in addition he can opt for a switch to the VTT in the middle of a series of OVTs. Even though the restrictions on the narrative use of the Dutch VTT make it impossible to tell the whole story in the VTT, the occasional VTT preserved the quantized character of the perfect, and is exploited by the translator for cases in which coercion of a stative/processlike verb is required. At a more global level, the occasional VTT allows the Dutch translator to preserve the fragmented character of the original story much more than the English translation, which tells us “just a story” in the simple past.

4. Time adverbials in translation

4.1 The hypothesis

As pointed out in section 2 above, the claim that the French PC is not a narrative tense, even though it does not resist narration means that temporal structure is not induced by the verb, but comes from the lexical semantics of the expressions used, from the rhetorical structure of the text, and from world knowledge. One of the linguistic means exploited by Camus is the use of time adverbials that indicate progress in time (*puis, ensuite, un moment après*). Given that the English translation makes exclusive use of the SP, and the Dutch one predominantly uses the OVT, we might expect the English and Dutch translations to make less use of means that impose temporal structure, such as time adverbials, because the SP and the OVT are the normal narrative tenses of the language, and wouldn't need support from other mechanisms to move time forward. This prediction was not borne out by the translations examined.

4.2 Presence/absence of time adverbials in French, English and Dutch

In the overwhelming majority of the cases, the time adverbial is simply translated, both in English and in Dutch. Some examples are given in (17):

- (17) a. Comme il était occupé, j'ai attendu un peu. Pendant tout ce temps, le concierge a parlé et **ensuite**, j'ai vu le directeur: il m'a reçu dans son bureau. C'est un petit vieux, avec la Légion d'honneur. Il m'a regardé de ses yeux clairs. **Puis** il m'a serré la main qu'il a gardée si longtemps que je ne savais trop comment la retirer. p. 11.
- b. He was busy, so I waited a bit. The caretaker talked the whole time and **then** he showed me into the warden's office. He was a small, elderly man with the Legion of Honour. He looked at me with his bright eyes. **Then** he shook my hand and held it for so long that I didn't quite know how to take it back again. p. 10.
- c. Omdat hij bezet was moest ik even wachten. Al die tijd bleef de concierge praten, en **daarna** ben ik bij de directeur geweest; hij ontving mij in zijn kantoor. Het is een kleine oude man, met het legioen van eer in zijn knoopsgat. Hij zag mij met zijn heldere ogen aan. **Daarna** schudde hij mij de hand, die hij zo lang vasthield dat ik niet meer wist hoe ik haar terug moest trekken. p. 64

In just one or two cases, the time adverbial in the French original is not translated in either the Dutch or the English text. An example of each case is given in (18) and (19):

- (18) a. La garde s'est levée et s'est dirigée vers la sortie. **A ce moment**, le concierge m'a dit: (...) p. 14
- b. The nurse stood up and went towards the door. **At that point** the caretaker said to me, (...) p. 12
- c. De verpleegster stond op en begaf zich naar de deur. De concierge zei: (...) p. 66
- (19) a. **Peu après**, avec les tramways plus rares et la nuit déjà noire au-dessus des arbres et des lampes, le quartier s'est vidé insensiblement, jusqu'à ce que le premier chat traverse lentement la rue de nouveau déserte. J'ai pensé **alors** qu'il fallait dîner. p. 41
- b. Soon afterwards, as the trams became fewer and the sky blackened above the trees and the lamps, the people gradually disappeared, until the street was deserted again and the first cat walked slowly across it. I thought maybe I ought to have some dinner. p. 28
- c. Kort daarna, toen er minder trams reden en de nacht reeds donker boven de bomen en de lantarens hing, werd het in te buurt onmerkbaar leger, totdat de eerste kat langzaam de opnieuw verlaten straat overstak. Ik dacht **toen** dat het tijd werd om te gaan eten. p. 83

However, these cases are rare, and we cannot conclude from the occasional example that the translator leaves out the time adverbial because the Dutch or English tense system does not require it. Interestingly, we did not find any examples where both the Dutch and the English translator left out the same time adverbial of the original. We take this to be sufficient proof that there is no systematic dropping of time adverbials in the translation process. Further support in favor of this negative conclusion, comes from cases where the translator inserts a time adverbial that was not there in the French original. Examples are in (20) through (22):

- (20) a. Il m'a regardé de ses yeux clairs. **Puis** il m'a serré la main qu'il a gardée si longtemps que je ne savais trop comment la retirer. Il a consulté un dossier et

- m'a dit: (...) p. 11
- b. He looked at me with his bright eyes. **Then** he shook my hand and held it for so long that I didn't quite know how to take it back again. He consulted a file and told me (...) p. 10
- c. Hij zag mij met zijn heldere ogen aan. **Daarna** schudde hij mij de hand, die hij zo lang vasthield dat ik niet meer wist hoe ik haar terug moest trekken. **Vervolgens** keek hij in een map en zei: (...). p. 64
- (21) a. Nous sommes restés silencieux assez longtemps. Le directeur s'est levé et a regardé par la fenêtre de son bureau. p. 24
- b. We sat in silence for quite a long time. **Then** the warden got up and looked out of the office window. p. 18
- c. Een tamelijk lange poos bleven wij zitten zonder iets te zeggen. **Daarna** stond de directeur op en keek door het raam van zijn werkkamer. p. 73
- (22) a. Quand nous sommes arrivés, le prêtre s'est relevé. Il m'a appelé "mon fils" et m'a dit quelques mots. Il est entré; je l'ai suivi. p. 25
- b. As we approached, the pries straightened up. He said a few words to me, addressing me as "my son". He went inside; I followed. p. 19
- c. Toen wij er aankwamen richtte de pastoor zich op. Hij zei "mijn jongen" tegen mij en sprak enkele woorden tegen mij. **Daarna** ging hij naar binnen en ik volgde hem. p. 73

We conclude that there is no evidence for our hypothesis that English and Dutch use less time adverbials because the narrative force of the SP and the OVT is stronger than that of the PC. There are several ways in which we can explain these findings.

One straightforward explanation of the facts is that our initial hypothesis about the PC was wrong. If the narrative force of the PC is not substantially weaker than that of the SP or the OVT, there is no reason to expect time adverbials that played a role in the French original to disappear in the Dutch and English translation. Although this explanation might have some appeal for those linguists who are not charmed by our analysis of the PC, it is of course not our preferred option at this point. So for the time being, we reject this hypothesis in an effort to maintain our initial approach. But we recognize that the issue of the time adverbials is a serious threat to our analysis.

We can try to explain the problem away by blaming the translator for staying too close to the French original. By maintaining all the time adverbials, he or she would not respect the rules for the temporal structure of the discourse associated with the English SP and the Dutch OVT. Although this is a possibility which cannot be totally excluded, we do not like this explanation any better than the first one. One reason is that neither the Dutch nor the English translation gives us the impression of being "bad" or lacking "fluency". Although the differences in the tense system make the English and Dutch texts reflect a slightly different atmosphere than the French original, native speakers don't experience the texts as artificial or badly phrased. For the time-being then, we also reject this hypothesis. Note that, in a weaker form, this hypothesis criticizes our methodology of developing a contrastive analysis on the basis of translations. This point is well taken, and ideally, our study should be complemented with translations of Dutch or English texts into the French PC and with other types of comparative studies of the actual use of time adverbials at the discourse level in the three languages. However, these results are not available (yet).

The third and most subtle explanation of our findings is the one we will explore in more detail below. According to this hypothesis, time adverbials are necessary, or at least useful in all three languages, but they play a different role in each of the languages studied. In other words, the interaction of the time adverbial with the tense system is a specific one in each language, and the translator preserves the time adverbial in the source text to create an equivalent, but maybe slightly different temporal structure in the target text.

4.3 Differentiation in the role of time adverbials

We find roughly three instantiations of the hypothesis that time adverbials can play different roles in English/Dutch from the one they play in French in our translations of *L'étranger*.

Case I: The time adverbial is in principle indispensable in the French original, and dispensable in the Dutch or English translation, but the presence of the time adverbial underlines the distance in time between the two events. This allows the translator to maintain as much as possible the fragmented, disconnected series of events that characterizes the French original. The following is an example:

- (23) a. Le concierge s'est penché vers elle, lui a parlé, mais elle a secoué la tête, a bredouillé quelque chose, et a continué de pleurer avec la même régularité. Le concierge est venu **alors** de mon côté. Il s'est assis près de moi. **Après un assez long moment**, il m'a renseigné sans me regarder: (...) p. 20
- b. The caretaker leant over and spoke to her, but she shook her head, mumbled something and went on sobbing with the same regularity as before. The caretaker **then** moved around to my side and sat down next to me. He was silent for quite a long time. **Then**, without looking at me, he explained, (...) p. 16
- c. De concierge boog zich naar haar toe, praatte tegen haar, maar zij schudde het hoofd, mompelde iets en zette met dezelfde regelmaat haar gesnik voort. **Daarna** kwam de concierge naast mij staan. Hij nam naast mij plaats. **Na geruime tijd** lichtte hij mij in, zonder mij aan te zien: (...) p. 70

Both time adverbials are dispensable in the English and Dutch texts, but they are nevertheless preserved in (23b,c). An important characteristic of time adverbials is that they overrule the current reference time (Kamp and Reyle 1993, de Swart 1999), and introduce a new reference time. As pointed out by de Swart (1999), this leads to a "break" in narrative structure. Instead of letting the story "tell itself" as a natural sequence of events, we jump around from one reference time to the next. It is quite conceivable that the translators have intentionally kept as many as possible of the time adverbials in the French original in order to underline the lack of narrative character of the novel. After all, a story told in the PC does not "tell itself", because the PC is not a narrative tense, and the set of events denoted by the propositions of the text is in principle an unordered set. Camus uses scenarios and strong rhetorical relations to create bits and pieces of narrative discourse, but the alienating nature of the novel is mostly due to the fact that the PC induces this fragmented, disconnected series of events. The Dutch and English translations have difficulty preserving the character of the French original, because they cannot tell the story in the PC, and need to resort to inherently narrative tenses like the OVT and the SP. Maintaining the time adverbials in the translation is one way of disrupting the overly strong narrative flavor of these tenses.

The claim that the time adverbial is dispensable in certain contexts is confirmed by the observation that it can be left out by the translator. An example is (18), repeated here as (24):

- (24) a. La garde s'est levée et s'est dirigée vers la sortie. **A ce moment**, le concierge m'a dit: (...) p. 14
 b. The nurse stood up and went towards the door. **At that point** the caretaker said to me, (...) p. 12
 c. De verpleegster stond op en begaf zich naar de deur. De concierge zei: (...) p. 66

Although the English translator maintains the time adverbial (24b), the Dutch translation does without (24c). Clearly, the Dutch text is more "fluent", more "narrative", because we do not reset the current reference time in between the two sentences.

Case II: The time adverbial plays a temporal role in the French original, but a more argumentative, rhetorical role in the English/Dutch translation. The following is an example:

- (25) a. J'ai demandé deux jours de congé à mon patron et il ne pouvait pas me les refuser avec une excuse pareille. Mais il n'avait pas l'air content. Je lui ai même dit: "Ce n'est pas de ma faute." Il n'a pas répondu. J'ai pensé **alors** que je n'aurais pas dû lui dire cela. p. 9
 b. I asked my boss for two days off and he couldn't refuse under the circumstances. But he didn't seem pleased. I even said, "It's not my fault." He didn't answer. **Then** I thought maybe I shouldn't have said that. p. 9
 c. Ik heb twee dagen vrij gevraagd aan mijn baas; die kon hij mij niet weigeren met een zo geldige reden. Maar hij was er niets mee ingenomen. Ik zei zelfs tegen hem: "Het is mijn schuld niet." Maar hij gaf geen antwoord. **Toen** bedacht ik dat ik hem dat niet had moeten zeggen. p. 63

The time adverbial *alors* in (25a) has both a temporal and an argumentative flavor. In the Dutch and English translations, the temporal value has almost disappeared in favor of the argumentative flavor: the proposition follows as a logical next step in the argumentation, rather than as the next event in a temporal order. The difference is a matter of degree, so the observation is a subtle one. However, the fact that (19) above, repeated here as (26) is an example where the English translator left out the *alors* of the French original in a context very similar to the one in (25) suggests that the adverbial is indeed not necessary for the temporal structure of the English text:

- (26) a. **Peu après**, avec les tramways plus rares et la nuit déjà noire au-dessus des arbres et des lampes, le quartier s'est vidé insensiblement, jusqu'à ce que le premier chat traverse lentement la rue de nouveau déserte. J'ai pensé **alors** qu'il fallait dîner. p. 41
 b. **Soon afterwards**, as the trams became fewer and the sky blackened above the trees and the lamps, the people gradually disappeared, until the street was deserted again and the first cat walked slowly across it. I thought maybe I ought to have some dinner. p. 28
 c. **Kort daarna**, toen er minder trams reden en de nacht reeds donker boven de bomen en de lantarens hing, werd het in te buurt onmerkbaar leger, totdat de

eerste kat langzaam de opnieuw verlaten straat overstak. Ik dacht **toen** dat het tijd werd om te gaan eten. p. 83

The Dutch translator maintains the adverbial, but again, the rhetorical, argumentative value of the expression *toen* is predominant in (26c).

Case III: The time adverbial is necessary in the French original for the temporal unfolding of the story. It is also necessary in the Dutch/English translation, but for a different reason. The temporal structure of the texts is equivalent, but slightly different, because of a different interaction between tense and time adverbial. The following is an example:

- (27) a. Il m'a regardé de ses yeux clairs. **Puis** il m'a serré la main qu'il a gardée si longtemps que je ne savais trop comment la retirer. p. 11
b. He looked at me with his bright eyes. **Then** he shook my hand and held it for so long that I didn't quite know how to take it back again. p. 10
c. Hij zag mij met zijn heldere ogen aan. **Daarna** schudde hij mij de hand, die hij zo lang vasthield dat ik niet meer wist hoe ik haar terug moest trekken. p. 64

Puis in the French original (27a) forces succession in time between two quantized events related in the PC. The English and Dutch translations *looked at me* and *zag mij aan* are not necessarily bounded in character, because they describe processes. The SP and OVT are not bounding this process. As a result, the temporal relation between the two sentences could be overlap as much as temporal succession. Insertion of an adverbial *then* or *daarna* forces the succession reading, and allows the activity in the first sentence to be interpreted as a process which takes the next event as its right boundary. The role *then* and *daarna* play in this context is reminiscent of the role *puis* plays in sequences of the type P1IMP *puis* P2PS, as discussed by Bras, Le Draoulec and Vieu (2001). They point out that *puis* imposes a right boundary to the inherently unbounded situation described by the sentence in the imparfait. As such, *puis* is indispensable in such contexts. If *then* and *daarna* have the same bounding role in contexts like (27b) and (27c), we can defend the view that they are indispensable in the English and Dutch translations, but for a different reason than Camus used *puis* in the French original.

This analysis is confirmed by the observation that some cases in which the translation has inserted time adverbials where they were absent in the French original are of this type. An example is (21), repeated here as (28):

- (28) a. Nous sommes restés silencieux assez longtemps. Le directeur s'est levé et a regardé par la fenêtre de son bureau. p. 24
b. We sat in silence for quite a long time. **Then** the warden got up and looked out of the office window. p. 18
c. Een tamelijk lange poos bleven wij zitten zonder iets te zeggen. **Daarna** stond de directeur op en keek door het raam van zijn werkkamer. p. 73

The measurement phrase *assez longtemps* indicates the bounded nature of the process in (28a). The PC confirms the quantized nature of the proposition. Although there is no explicit temporal relation established between the two sentences, we can assume temporal succession because of the contrast between sitting in silence and getting up. Because the two activities are incompatible, they cannot be true at the same time, and we infer that the getting up follows the sitting in silence. Both the English and the Dutch translation insert a time adverbial which

makes the temporal relation of succession explicit. Apparently, the presence of the measurement phrases *for quite a long time* and *een tamelijk lange poos* is not sufficient to interpret the first sentence as denoting a quantized event. They still have the flavor of an unbounded process, and the transparency of the SP and the OVT leaves it at that. In order to impose a right boundary on this process, the translators introduce time adverbials which force succession in time.

4.4 Conclusion

We conclude that our original hypothesis, which predicted that we would find less time adverbials in the English and Dutch translations of *L'étranger*, has to be replaced with the more fine-grained hypothesis that the presence and absence of time adverbials in the three languages is governed by the interaction with the tense system in each of these languages. We distinguished three cases. In the first case, the time adverbial in the English/Dutch translations breaks the overly narrative flavor of the text, which is due to the obligatory use of narrative tenses like the SP and the OVT. In the second case, the time adverbial gets both a temporal and an argumentative flavor in the French original, but the translations heavily emphasize the argumentative value of the adverbial. The third case concerns the difference in aspectual nature of the SP and the OVT on the one hand, and the PC on the other hand. The SP and the OVT differ from the PC in that they can be considered narrative tenses. As such, we might find less of a need for time adverbials that induce progress in time. However, the PC forces the eventuality denoted by the proposition to have a quantized character. Unbounded states and processes are reported by the Imparfait. In contrast, the SP and the OVT are aspectually transparent, so they preserve the aspectual character of the eventuality involved. Bras and Le Draoulec (2001) observe that the role of *puis* in sequences where P1 is in the imparfait and P2 is in the PS is quite different from the one in sequences where both propositions are in the PS. In *L'étranger*, all examples of time adverbials that induce progress in time relate two propositions in the PC. Insofar as both sentences in the PS (de Swart 1998) and sentences in the PC (de Swart 2000) describe quantized events in the past, this implies that the uses of *puis* that we find in *L'étranger* are similar to the ones that Bras, Le Draoulec and Vieu (2000, 2001) describe for sequences of the structure P1PS *puis* P2PS. However, in their English/Dutch translations, we find cases in which the first proposition denotes an unbounded state/process, rather than a quantized event. Whereas the time adverbial in the French original is indispensable to compensate for the lack of narrative force of the PC, it is necessary in English/Dutch for aspectual reasons.

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