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# 7 The Development of Reference to Time and Space in French L3: Evidence from Narratives

Pascale Trévisiol

## Introduction

This chapter deals with the acquisition of the procedures that are necessary for the construction of a type of narrative discourse during speech production in a foreign language. Our study concerns the problems of reference to basic concepts, time and space, selected in the oral production of a narrative based on a fiction. We observe how Japanese learners, who are students in their home country and little exposed to the target language (TL), are constructing such a type of discourse in French, after they have learnt English (see Trévisiol, 2003). It thus raises the problem of L3 and examines whether and how its acquisition process differs (or not) from that of L1 or L2.

The production of a coherent text online implies several mental operations, among which Levelt (1989) distinguishes 'the processes involved in the genesis of the underlying ideas of the discourse' (conceptualization) and 'the processes involved in the choice of linguistic forms to express these ideas' (formulation) (Perdue, 1984: 99). But both types of processes are strongly correlated and several studies have shown their interaction: the grammatical and phonological encoding of the formulator depends on the preverbal message of the conceptualizer, but also on the grammar of the language used, which influences the way information is selected and organized (cf. Carroll & von Stutterheim, 1997).

Ellis' (1994) learning model in an instructed environment shows how various types of knowledge (both explicit and implicit) interact in the treatment of language, thus for grammatical encoding. 'Explicit' knowledge corresponds to the analyzed, abstract and explanatory knowledge, which

exists independently of its use. The learner is aware of it and it is verbalizable. 'Implicit' knowledge comprises two categories: formulaic knowledge and knowledge based on rules. It is intuitive, in the sense that the learner does not seem to be aware to have learnt it. It emerges only in performance, and in this sense, is procedural.

When constructing discourse, any speaker has to produce well-formed utterances but also to organize these utterances in order to communicate coherent and understandable speech to the addressee. Constraints apply at two levels: the local level (of the utterance) and the global level (of the text). The model of discourse analysis proposed by Klein and von Stutterheim (1991), called the 'Quaestio' model, allows us to take into account these two levels of analysis, as well as the narrow interaction which takes place between them. The structure of a produced text constitutes the answer to the 'Quaestio', a global question which can be implicit or explicit. The Quaestio constrains the organization of the text on the global level (foreground/background) and on the local level (topic/focus structure of the foreground utterances). The Quaestio of a narrative can be formulated in the following way: 'What happened (for P) in  $T_i$  (in L) ?'. P, if expressed, refers to a protagonist (in a film retelling) or the narrator (in a personal narrative) and  $T_i$  specifies the temporal reference interval. Reference to space (L) can also be involved. The speaker has then to select the relevant sub-events and order them in a way that his text reports the structure of the events and the temporal relations between them.

## Objectives

Our study aims at the following objectives:

- (1) To estimate the influence of the used language and its degree of control by a speaker on the way he conceptualizes a communicative task and constructs discourse in L1 and L3.
- (2) To determine the respective weight of prior linguistic knowledge (Japanese L1, English L2) in production and its role in the expression of temporal and spatial concepts in L3.
- (3) To determine the impact of the context of acquisition (instructed environment) on the adopted means (comparison with untutored learners, cf. ESF project, Perdue, 1993).

## Hypotheses

The analysis of temporal and spatial reference in the narrative data of Japanese speakers should allow to establish the existence of relations between grammaticalization and conceptualization, in L1 as in L3 (in the form of transfer), and to bring to light the crosslinguistic influences of the languages

L1 and L2 in the process of production in L3. Indeed, we can easily imagine that to carry out the task in L3, the speakers are going to appeal to their previous linguistic knowledge and that Japanese L1 and English L2 are both going to play a role during the speech production in L3, but at different levels, according to Green's (1986) bilingual and de Bot's (1992, 2004) multilingual models of production: L1 in the phase of conceptualization when selecting the information to express reference to time and space, L2 in competition with L3 in the phase of formulation of the preverbal message. L2 can be activated according to several factors (e.g. competence, recency, (psycho)typology, L2 status). The L1 influence will be present at an abstract level and the L2 influence at a surface level: the appeal to English will be consequently a punctual and not persistent phenomenon, directly related to L3 performance.

## Methodology

### The Informants' Profile

We collected data from Japanese learners of French and Japanese native speakers (control group). The learners answered a questionnaire concerning their level of studies in L3 and their proficiency in L2. Table 7.1 summarizes their profile. This group gathered 20 students who were not specialists of French (as a second foreign language), and had learnt English as their first foreign language at secondary school and high school. Most of them were continuing the study of this L2 at the university. In spite of the relatively important duration of this learning (7–10 years), the results of their self-assessment show that only four of them estimated their level of English to be good or high. A less subjective measure of their proficiency may have given different results.

**TABLE 7.1** The informants' profile

Subjects	Proficiency level	Number	Exposure to TL	Other
Japanese learners	Elementary (I)	7 subjects	100–200 h	
	Intermediate (II)	7	150–300 h	
	Advanced (III)	6	350–550 h	3 subjects: language school in France (1 month)
Japanese native speakers		11		

Three proficiency levels were brought out of a first data analysis. These levels do not necessarily correspond to the duration of learning; they have been delimited according to the following criteria:

- The degree of linguistic autonomy in the production: speakers do or do not resort to the investigator's scaffolding (in L1, L2 or L3) to carry out the task.
- The degree of textual coherence/cohesion: presence/absence of temporal and spatial anaphorical means, functional/random use of articles.
- The degree of syntactic and morphological complexity in discourse: presence/absence of subordinate clauses, of grammatical marking (verbal morphology) of temporal relations: anteriority, simultaneity.

The control group of native speakers constituted 11 students who had no knowledge of French. Comparing this group with the groups of learners aimed at determining the possible influence of L1 on speakers' choices in L3.

## Communicative Task

In order to obtain narrative data, the informants have been asked to perform a Complex Verbal Task (cf. Levelt, 1989), defined as a type of task which 'activates a verbal production implying the implementation of a set of complex linguistic means' (Watorek, 1998: 243). They had to tell a story based on a montage of Chaplin's movie *Modern Times*, without any preparation (spontaneous production).

This methodological support comprises two main parts. The first part establishes the existence and the identity of the two protagonists – Chaplin and a poor young girl – and presents their individual stories in parallel. The second part tells the events they are confronted with: the girl is arrested by the police after she has stolen a loaf of bread from a bakery van and bumped into Chaplin. He tries his best to get arrested and soon joins the girl in the police van. Both manage to escape, after an accident. They finally find a ruined shack and settle down there, in spite of numerous incidents.

The investigation took place in the same conditions for all the subjects, who were individually seen by the researcher: they were asked to retell the second part of the film for somebody absent who knew only the first part, so that he could understand the whole story. In order to help the learner represent himself the absent interlocutor, the investigator did not view the second part with him. In this context, the first part of the film served as a common ground from which the learner had to build his mode of referring to the characters, the places and the moments of the events according to their old or new informational status for the addressee.

Both groups of informants carried out the same communicative task, except that the person playing the investigator's role was a French native

speaker in the case of the learners producing in French L3 and a Japanese native speaker in the case of the speakers producing in Japanese L1. When the informant had stopped viewing the second part of the film, the investigator asked the question: 'What happened in the second part?'. In Japanese L1, the investigator's intervention was minimal. In French L3, the investigator asked questions or helped the learner by providing lexicon if necessary. This scaffolding greatly varied according to the learner's profile and proficiency in L3.

## Input and Learning Conditions

The learners received a traditional French instruction based on grammar and translation. Language courses in Japanese universities are often characterized by a restricted use of the TL, with poor and mainly written input. Trévisé (1979) questions the role of the metalinguistic constituent of TL forms instruction in the acquisition of a foreign language. How does the presentation of morphology and syntax, based on grammatical and functional classes, affect the learner's production?

In an instructed environment, the learner consciously resorts to taught rules. Nevertheless, studies have shown that the productions of some instructed learners are very similar to those of noninstructed learners. It is the case in particular with complex verbal tasks that represent a means of bypassing the 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972). Lending oneself to a spontaneous oral production implies the implementation of operations leaving little space to the effective control of one's own production. Under communicative pressure, the speaker does not have the time to consult his 'learnt' knowledge (Ellis' explicit knowledge), and only the (implicit) 'acquired' knowledge works, that is to say available knowledge in his long-term memory. The resolution of the task goes through semantic and discursive choices which require a lot of attention and thus leave few attention resources available for lower-level formal choices. This situation requires the learner to automatize these low level units (as much as possible), as is the case in L1, so that attention and control can be applied to the high-level decisions (conceptual activity).

## Reference to Time

The languages of our study allow speakers to specify events along three dimensions: temporality, aspect and 'Aktionsart'.

Temporality refers to the temporal relation between an event and a reference point, which is given either by the situational context or by the speaker and the addressee's general knowledge (Klein, 1989).

Aspect refers to the various 'perspectives' (Smith, 1986) the speaker can take toward an event, considering it as perfective vs. imperfective,

progressive vs. not progressive and so on. In Japanese (as in English), aspect plays an important role and its expression is grammaticalized in the present as in the past. In French, this category reveals itself only in the past, through the opposition ‘IMPARFAIT’ vs. ‘PASSE COMPOSE’.

‘Aktionsart’ or mode of action relates to the intrinsic temporal characteristics of an event, inherent to the lexical contents of the verbal predicate. Vendler’s typology (1967) provides a four-way classification, summarized in Table 7.2.

Time is a central notion in narratives: this referential domain is indeed constituent of this type of task, because it is the one which structures the narrative ‘skeleton’ (cf. Labov, 1972). The speaker relies on this domain to linearize the contents he has selected and to anchor this information in a global reference frame. It is necessary to distinguish personal narrative, which implies a double location (deictic and anaphoric), and fiction narrative, where deictic location with respect to ‘here and now’ is superfluous, given that ‘I’ is not involved. The relation by default between the time of reference and the utterance time is not a relation of anteriority. This is why certain native speakers – French and German speakers in particular – (cf. Hendriks, 2005; Lambert *et al.*, 2008) do not generally anchor their narrative in the past and choose to answer the Quæstio ‘then, what happens (for P) ?’ as they resort to a neutral narrative tense like present tense. In order to get closer to the competence of French native speakers, it is thus enough, for this type of narrative, to organize the events between them (anaphoric location).

Studies revealed that in the acquisition of verb inflection, the learner is driven by two types of hypotheses which can be complementary: a semantic hypothesis (‘Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis’, cf. Andersen & Shirai, 1994) based on the mode of action of the predicate, and/or a pragmatic-discourse hypothesis (cf. Hopper, 1979) based on the discursive organization Foreground/Background. According to the first hypothesis, telic verbs attract the use of perfective aspect and atelic verbs the use of imperfective aspect. According to the second hypothesis, perfective is rather used in the Foreground, and imperfective in the Background. Both hypotheses can converge, implying the following typical combinations: Foreground + Telic verbs + Perfective and Background + Atelic verbs + Imperfective.

**TABLE 7.2** Vendler’s classification of events

States	Activities	Accomplishments	Achievements
Atelic verbs		Telic verbs	
<i>avoir</i>	<i>courir</i>	<i>peindre un tableau</i>	<i>trouver</i>
<i>aimer</i>	<i>nager</i>	<i>faire un gâteau</i>	<i>gagner</i>
<i>savoir</i>	<i>pousser</i>	<i>écrire un roman</i>	<i>tomber</i>

## Temporal Reference in L3

### Morphological means

In order to analyze the narrative data in L3, we looked at the morphological means used by the learners. We listed all the verbal forms, whether or not they corresponded to forms of the TL, then quantified the forms presenting an inflectional morphology, and scored the verbs expressing a recognizable temporal function in the TL (functional morphology). The distinction form/function allows us to see whether the learners are able or not to associate forms with temporal and/or aspectual functions. We distinguished the following paradigms:

- (1) **Vø**: short forms close to the PRESENT tense. Ex: *il va* 'he goes'
- (2) **Ve**: long forms that look like the infinitive of some verbs (first group), or a past participle with an ending in [e]/[i]/[y] (non finite forms), or IMPARFAIT (finite forms).  
Exs: *il march[e]* 'he walk', *il y avait* 'there was'.
- (3) **Vr**: phonetic infinitive forms. Ex: *tu souveni[R]* 'you remember'.
- (4) **Aux + Ve**: composed forms with 'être' or 'avoir' auxiliary and a verbal form with an ending in [e]/[i], that look like PASSE COMPOSE or PLUS-QUE-PARFAIT.  
Exs: *il a [pri]* 'he has taken', *il avait volé* 'he had stolen'.
- (5) **Aux + Vø**: composed forms with 'être' or 'avoir' auxiliary and a verbal form close to the present tense. Ex: *il n'a pas [pEj]* 'he has not pay'.
- (6) **AuxE + Ve**: composed forms with 'être' auxiliary and a verbal form close to a past participle, that look like passive present/past or resultative present (with *c'est* 'it is').  
Exs: *chaplin est [arete]* 'chaplin is arrested', *elle a été [pri]* 'she has been caught', *c'est fini* 'it is over'.

Table 7.3 summarizes the proportions of the most frequently used morphological forms – more than 90% of the total – which are the simple forms Vø and Ve and the composed forms Aux + Ve. The use of the Vø forms is more frequent in group II (63%). The Ve forms decrease regularly. In group III, 3% are comparable to the IMPARFAIT. As for the composed forms Aux + Ve, they are used in the same proportions in groups I and II, then increase in group III (51%).

As shown in Figure 7.1, the distribution of these forms across the three level groups does not evolve much, except for Ve (which is decreasing) and Aux + Ve. The use of past tense is moreover atypical for this kind of task which does not require temporal anchoring in the past nor deictic location with respect to Utterance Time. According to Noyau (2002), it is a purely conventional solution: past stories must be told in the past tense. We also



TABLE 7.3 Development of morphological means in French L3

	Vø	Ve	Aux + Ve
Elementary (I)	67 (42%)	38 (24%)	37 (23%)
Intermediate (II)	173 (63%)	39 (14%)	61 (22%)
Advanced (III)	102 (40%)	23 (9%)	133 (51%)

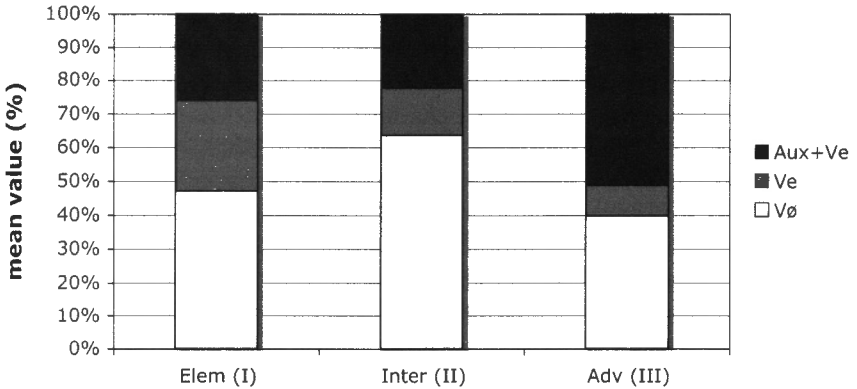


Figure 7.1 Distribution of the main verbal forms used in French L3

consider it as a phenomenon of overcorrection, attributable to the instructed environment, which demonstrates particular attention to forms as such (integration of grammatical rules).

*Discursive organization and mode of action*

We tested the influence of both the organization of discourse into a Foreground/Background and the mode of action of predicates on the verbal morphology of the most developed narratives in each group (nine narratives).

Figures 7.2 through 7.4 show the development of verb morphology across the levels, thanks to a coalition of factors leading toward the acquisition of a functional morphology.

At level I, verbal forms have no semantic or pragmatic function. The forms Vø appear in both the Foreground and the Background and with any type of predicate; we note however a more common association with atelic predicates. The forms Aux + Ve are rather associated with telic predicates.

At level II, the Vø forms (close to the PRESENT) are massively used through all the categories and are influenced neither by the discursive organization, nor by the type of predicate. Aux + Ve forms (close to the PASSE COMPOSE) are employed in the same way as in level I. We do not observe any particular tendency for the non finite forms Ve.

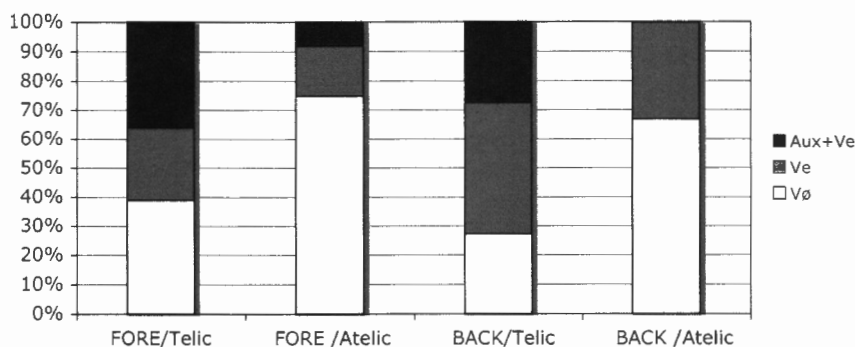


Figure 7.2 Use of morphological forms in group I

At level III, the PRESENT is employed massively only in the Background and with atelic predicates. Finite forms in Ve (IMPARFAIT) too are more used in this type of grounding. As for the PASSE COMPOSE, it dominates the temporal expression in the Foreground, with any type of predicate. We also find it in the Background with telic predicates.

The results of level III highlight the influence of semantic and pragmatic factors. The typical associations of the Foreground and telicity with the PASSE COMPOSE on the one hand, and of the Background and atelicity with the PRESENT tense on the other, show that both hypotheses play a joint role in the verbal forms adopted by the learner.

The atypical combination of atelicity in the Foreground and telicity in the Background allows us to see which factor has more influence on the marking of the predicate. The use of the PASSE COMPOSE in the Foreground with atelic predicates seems to be driven by the pragmatic discursive function, whereas its use in the Background with telic verbs is likely to be constrained by the inherent semantism of the predicates. This atypical use

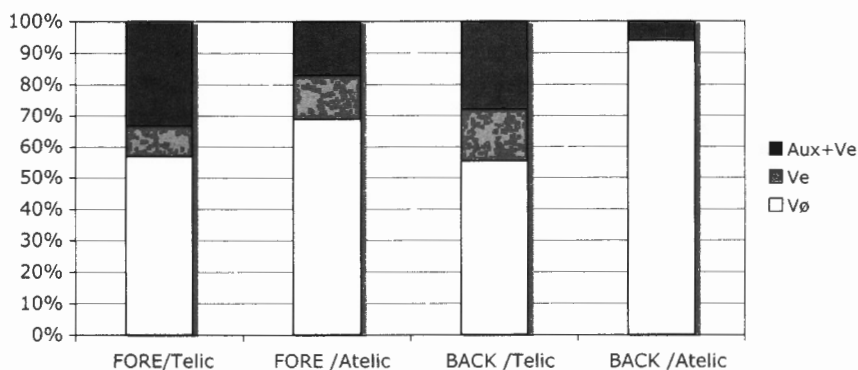
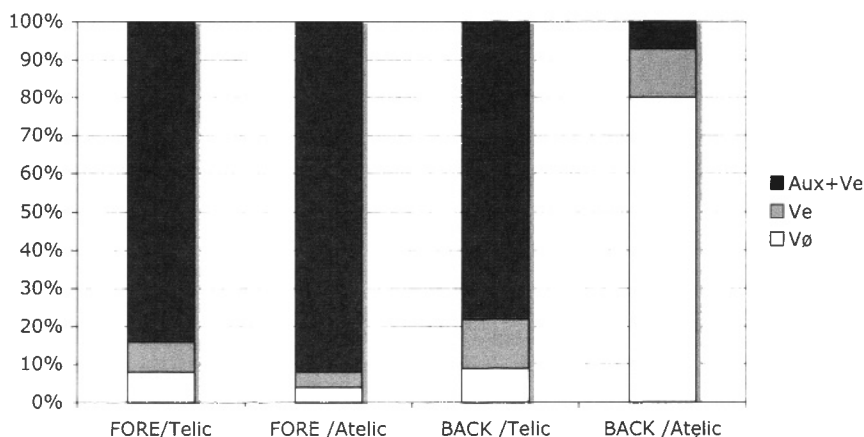


Figure 7.3 Use of morphological forms in group II



**Figure 7.4** Use of morphological forms in group III

of forms marked in the past (with a perfective value) in the main structure with atelic predicates was also found by Bardovi-Harlig (2000) in Japanese and Korean learners' narratives in English L2, with the same task. As for the use of the PASSE COMPOSE with telic predicates in the Background, it corresponds to cases when the learner returns to events again and disrupts chronological order.

Thus, both hypotheses contribute to account for the use of verbal morphemes in the learners of level III. Nevertheless, the massive use of past perfective forms in the Foreground whatever the semantic nature of the verbal predicate gives more weight to the pragmatic hypothesis.

## Temporal Reference in L1

Figure 7.5 shows the use of the aspecto-temporal marks of Perfective and Imperfective in the native speakers' narratives. We can observe, just like in the learners' data, a marked preference for the use of perfective aspect with telic predicates in the Foreground. However, as regards the Background, the treatment of temporality is contrasted and subject to a great inter-individual variability: the typical association of atelicity and imperfective aspect prevails in four texts, while the other speakers resorted to the atypical combination of telicity and perfective aspect.

The atypical use of the past perfective (*-ta* forms) in the Background answers the speaker's need to express anteriority in relation with the TSit of an event serving as a landmark. We also find it, as in the example below, in subordinate clauses to determine the introduced or reintroduced referent on the basis of shared knowledge with the listener (previous context).

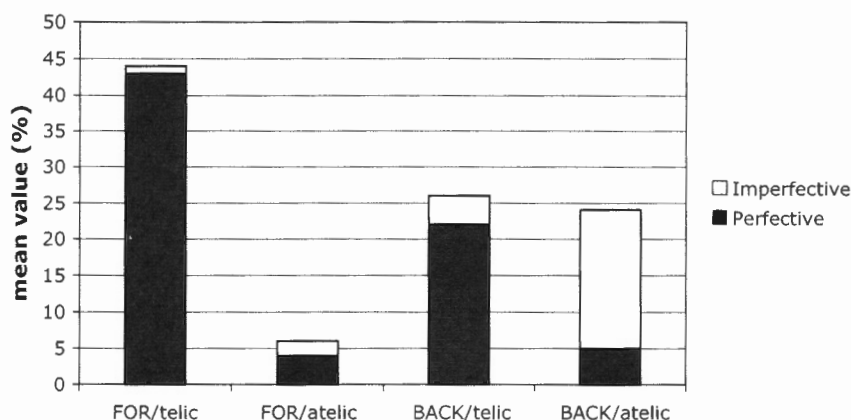


Figure 7.5 Use of verbal forms in Japanese L1

(1) KUM

de soko de kaketsuketa panyasan to keikan ni mitsukatte shimaimasu.  
 and/there/LOC/rush up-(Past)/baker/and/policeman/to be discovered  
*and there (she) finally is found out by the baker and the policeman who rushed up*

*kaketsuketa* ('rushed up') refers to the action of the reintroduced referents *panyasan* ('baker') and *keikan* ('policeman'), which occurred before the action of the predicate *mitsukatte shimaimasu* ('is discovered').

The association of telicity and perfective aspect in verbal morphology works in interaction with various discursive contexts, like Foreground (typical cases with atemporal sequences in *-te*, closed by *-ta* or *-u* forms) but also (anaphoric) anteriority in the Background (with *-ta*). As for the association of atelicity and imperfective (forms in *-tei-*), it typically appears in the Background when the speaker describes the elements of a scene or makes comments, or when he wants to mark simultaneity between two actions, the first one (in progress, in the Background) being used as a frame for the second one (punctual, in the Foreground). In the atypical cases in the Foreground, the speaker is inside the action in progress and retells the events using a descriptive strategy: the spatial or temporal expression in the Topic serves as a landmark around which an action takes place, seen under an imperfective angle. The durative action is then bounded on the right by the spatial or temporal expression of the following utterance.

## Reference to Space

Reference to space refers to the construction of spatial relations between an entity which may or may not be in motion and another entity which

serves to localize it implicitly or explicitly. If we use Talmy's (1983) terminology, the 'Figure' is put in movement and/or located with respect to the 'Ground' through the predicate, which can be static or dynamic.

All languages distinguish at least three types of relations between the Figure and the Ground:

- Static general location: the Figure stays fixed in space and the expressed relation corresponds to a state.
- Dynamic general location: the Figure moves inside borders defined by the Ground and the expressed relation corresponds to a movement in a general location.
- Change of location: the Figure moves and crosses borders. It is located with respect to a Ground which serves either as point of departure or as place of destination for the movement of the Figure. The expressed relation corresponds to a movement implying a change of location.

According to Talmy's typology (1985), particularly his account of how spatial information is distributed in the utterance, Japanese belongs to the same family as French ('verb-framed languages'): as in Romance languages, direction is encoded in the verb root (ex: *saru* = 'to leave') and the expression of the manner of movement is optionally expressed by another verb preceding the main verb (ex: *hashiri-saru* = 'to run-to leave'). Japanese thus differs from English (a 'satellite-framed language') which preferably encodes direction in prepositions and manner in the verb root (even though it is still possible to use simple predicates encoding direction, e.g. *to leave*). However, some authors treat Japanese (as Mandarin, cf. Ji, 2009; Yu, 1996) in an intermediate category where manner and trajectory are equally in focus ('equipollent languages' cf. Slobin, 2004). Japanese indeed presents numerous cases of constructions with serial verbs of equivalent syntactic status, where the first verb encodes manner of movement and the second verb encodes path (direction) (cf. Matsunaga, 2006). We also find, as in Korean, constructions with a deictic verb as the main verb, and path and manner verbs expressed in subordinate, nonfinite forms (Choi & Bowerman, 1991) (cf. section 'Reference to space in L1'). The typological nature of Japanese is thus still debated. If we consider Japanese as a 'verb-framed language' as evidenced by the main predicates expressing direction, we can say that the Japanese learners of French are learning a system of representation of the movement partially similar to that of their L1, and different from the system of their L2. If they appeal to their knowledge of English L2, it is then liable to pull them in the opposite direction of the TL system. Which concept (direction or manner) are they going to favor in the expression of movement in L3?

## Reference to Space in L3

### *Types of location*

Table 7.4 shows the types of location expressed in the learners' narratives through the implemented verbal repertoire. We scored the verbal forms followed by a spatial expression. We can observe a diversification of the verbal repertoire from level II for dynamic relations. Static relations are more and more frequently expressed with the mention of the Ground across the levels, whereas dynamic relations (general location) are less expressed in level III.

Figure 7.6 shows the proportions of the three types of location (in percentages) and their evolution across the three groups. At each level of proficiency in the TL, change of location is by far the spatial relation most frequently expressed; from a group to another, its proportion is outstandingly regular (between 61% and 62%).

We can see in the dominant expression of this type of location a direct influence of the type of task: in narratives, changes of location (which rather appear in the Foreground) are essential to make the story progress.

In the three types of location, we observe little evolution. The expression of static relations is slightly more significant in group III: from this level, learners have more formal means and are able to take some distance from the Foreground and make descriptions or refer to static situations in the Background. The learners of levels I and II have a more restricted system of reference to (static) location and prefer to localize entities with dynamic verbs. The treatment of the task, which implies to answer the *quæstio* 'what happened (for P) in  $T_i + 1$ ?' and to organize a chain of dynamic events, is more 'prototypical' than in the advanced level (cf. Klein & Perdue, 1997; Watorek, 1998).

### *Internal structure of spatial expressions*

The analysis of the internal structure of spatial expressions shows the main use of the prepositions *à* ('to'/'at'), *de* ('from'), *dans* ('in'/'into') – and

**TABLE 7.4** Types of location expressed in L3 (types/tokens)

	Static location		Dynamic gen. location		Change of location		Total	
	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
Elementary (I)	2	4	7	9	9	20	18	33
Intermediate (II)	3	7	12	26	13	51	28	84
Advanced (III)	5	12	10	15	17	44	32	71

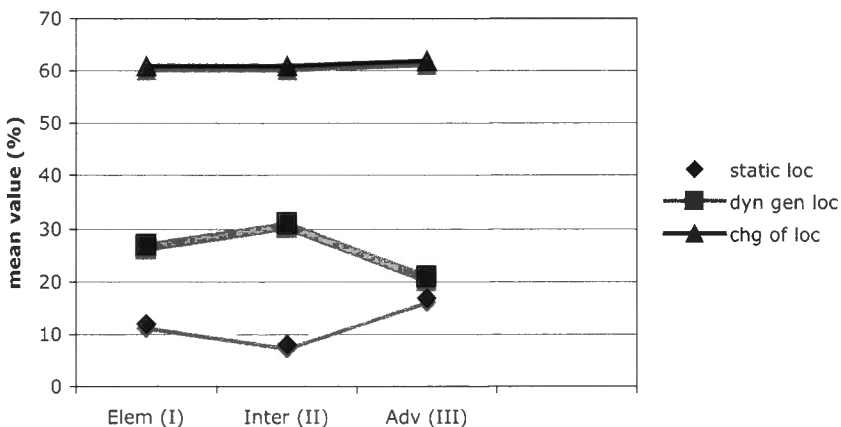


Figure 7.6 Types of location expressed in L3 (percentages)

*sur* ('on') to a lesser degree – as well as the absence of preposition (corresponding to the pattern 'V + N') to express dynamic relations with or without crossing borders.

For dynamic general location, learners mainly resort to the preposition *dans*, which marks the location of the referent in the internal sub-space of the Ground. It generally presents prototypical properties of a three-dimensional container (ex: *voiture*, 'car'). Until level II, the use of *dans* is in competition with *à* or the absence of preposition ('V'), more particularly to localize entities in relation to nonprototypical Grounds (ex: *rue*, 'street'). With the use of *à* or the absence of any preposition, the entities are then localized 'in the region of the Ground' (cf. Carroll & Becker, 1993).

As for changes of location, they are expressed with different means according to the proficiency levels. In Group I, the learners mainly rely on the use of the verb without preposition ('V'), to refer to the referent's movement: the path (directed toward the target) is then expressed by the verb semantics, which encodes direction (ex: [*ale*]/ [*va*], [*vjE* ~] = 'go', 'come'). This scheme was found in the Basic Variety (cf. ESF project, Perdue, 1993): the Arabic-speaking learners of that study used the same pattern, as if the verb integrated the semantic value expressed in French by the preposition (cf. Véronique & Porquier, 1986). We note no occurrence of *dans*, which is reserved to dynamic general location.

In Group II, the learners keep using the pattern 'V + N', but they mainly use the preposition *à* to mark the target Ground. In Group III, they essentially appeal to *dans* (with the verb *entrer*, 'to enter') to mark the internal sub-space of the target Ground. The preposition *à* is used only with the verb *aller* ('to go'). They seem to have built a system opposing these two

prepositions in the expression of efferent movement (*aller à/ entrer dans*), in order to mark the distinction between the conceptualization of a target as a simple destination (*à*) and as an internal sub-space (*dans*).

This distinction reminds us of children's strategy in L1, which consists in simplifying the learning task by attributing as much as possible a single function to each form (Slobin, 1982). This strategy of simplification in adults has been described in numerous studies (on spatiality, cf. Hendriks, 1998). Unlike the marking of target Ground, the marking of source Ground does not constitute a problem for the learners who adopt very early the preposition *de* ('from'). However, the expression of the target of movement is given more weight. Finally, the expression of border space and contact between the Figure and the Ground with *sur* emerges quite late and the use of this preposition can be facilitated by English L2 (ex 2).

(2) HIU (II)

il entre la maison.

quand il close ☞ [fErm] le door ☞ la porte

le bâton fell down ☞ [to ~ b] sur le head ☞ son tête.

*He enter the house. When he close the door, the stick fell down on his head*

The proportion of the expression *sur* ('on') in the texts remains weak at level III, even if more speakers are using it. In all the cases, *sur* is almost exclusively used with prototypical bi-dimensional surface Grounds (exs: *terre*, *rue* = 'ground', 'street').

We thus see that the target-like use of *dans* and *sur* to mark topological relations is very gradually established: the learners have difficulties with the expression of inclusion and contact when the figure is mobile and crossing boundaries. This point has been noticed in other studies concerning the acquisition of spatial relations in L2, with other source/target languages (cf. Becker & Carroll, 1997).

## Reference to Space in L1

In Japanese, static location is generally encoded by a predicate consisting of a static verb and a spatial expression followed by the locative particle NI. Dynamic general location is encoded by a predicate consisting of a dynamic verb and a spatial expression followed by the particle DE or O. As for change of location, it is expressed through a dynamic predicate consisting of a dynamic verb and a spatial expression followed by the particle O or KARA when the Ground is the departure point, NI, E or MADE when the Ground is the destination place.

The proportion of these three types of location (with explicit mention of the Ground) in the narrative texts (see Table 7.5) shows that the Japanese



speakers favored the expression of change of location, according to the type of task.

The speakers give spatial information essentially to describe the path (from source to target) of the protagonists between places. In the expression of this path, the target Ground (42%) is the point that is most frequently made explicit, as shown in Table 7.6.

Besides single predicates encoding direction, the native speakers also employed in the same proportions compound predicates encoding several types of spatial information (direction/manner/deixis/causation). As shown in Table 7.7, the most represented information is direction (34%) in single predicates (exs: *iku* = 'to go', *hairu* = 'to enter') and deixis (25%) in compound predicates (ex: *dete-kuru* = 'to go out-to come'). Through the use of the auxiliaries *iku* ('to go') and *kuru* ('to come'), the speakers indirectly maintain spatial reference as they project their deictic point of view (origo) on one of the protagonists on stage. The explicitation of the Ground is not necessary to express a change of location as the verb root of these auxiliaries encodes a crossing of spatial borders. They also tend to express the cause of movement, in combination with another type of spatial information.

As in other studies on narrative or descriptive productions (cf. Berman & Slobin, 1994; Ji, 2009), these results show that typological differences influence the organization of spatial reference on the discursive level.

TABLE 7.6 Marking of the ground in the expression of path in Japanese L1

Dynamic gen. location		Change of location		Total
FRAME (DE)	PATH (O)	TARGET (NI)	SOURCE (KARA, O)	
62	8	78	36	184
34%	4%	42%	20%	
70 (38%)		114 (62%)		100%

TABLE 7.7 Spatial concepts encoded in the verb root in L1

Single predicates				Compound predicates				Total
MAN	DIR	DX	CAUS	MAN/CAUS	MAN/DIR	DIR/CAUS	Other/DX*	
11	43	7	4	9	10	11	31	126
9%	34%	6%	3%	7%	8%	9%	25%	100%

\*Other/DX = one or several types of spatial information (direction, manner, causation) associated with deixis (DX)

## Discussion

In order to express time reference, the Japanese learners essentially appeal, in the first stages of acquisition, to base forms of the PRESENT and to other means, both pragmatic (principle of chronological order) and lexical (adverbs and connectors), which allow to organize the events and carry out the narrative task at a lower cognitive cost. The temporal morphology, which punctually appears, is not very functional. Such a strategy is common to all learners with relatively few available formal means. At level II, grammaticalized means of the TL (functional morphology of past) are emerging, used at level III in a massive and systematic way. In L3, the speakers thus try to anchor their narrative in the past, whereas in L1 they appeal to atemporal *-te* forms marking merely successive events. The influence of L1 is present at level III in the expression of certain temporal concepts, such as perfectivity, through the influence of the semantic features of the predicates on the verbal forms. However, the past perfective does not fill the same functions in both types of speakers: in L1, it is used in the narrative Background and serves to express the relative anteriority of an event in relation to another event. In L3, the PASSE COMPOSE serves above all to bound over-explicitly the telic or atelic events of the Foreground, but it is also used in the narrative Background for the expression of flashbacks: it marks perfectivity as well as anteriority. However, the connection between the two linguistic systems is relative and does not concern all verbal forms: the aspecto-temporal value of the PASSE COMPOSE is indeed more transparent than that of the IMPARFAIT, which is rarely used. This difference of transparency is certainly linked to the discursive functions of these forms, as the imperfective is used above all to mark the Background. As in other acquisitional studies of temporality (e.g. Brum de Paula, 1998; Kihlstedt, 1998; Paprocka, 2000), the acquisition of the perfective precedes that of the imperfective, although this latter notion is grammaticalized in L1. The learners have not transferred this type of knowledge from their native language.

In the spatial domain, the learners adopt the most efficient means for this type of task, following the emergencies of communication: the expression of the direction of motion is far more frequent than the expression of static or dynamic location. This tendency appears less clearly in the native speakers, who express more dynamic locations. The acquisition of the TL-specific means to refer to space does not seem to be influenced by the L1 (cf. Carroll & Becker, 1993): the adopted means reflect the structure of the TL. The expression of movement is achieved in L1 as in L3 through the verb root, which encodes direction. However, the native speakers also use a large number of complex predicates encoding several types of information (direction, manner, deixis, causation) (ex 3), whereas the learners simplify the task resorting to predicates encoding the most essential type of information: direction. Only some advanced learners succeed in combining the expression

of direction with another type of information (manner or causation), according to the tendencies of their L1, more or less successfully (ex 4). At a less advanced level, the verbal constructions adopted to encode causation seem more directly influenced by English (ex 5).

- (3) SHU  
hashiri nigete iku tokoro de chappulin to shômenshôtotsu shite.  
to run-to escape-to go/moment/LOC/Chaplin/COM/front collision/to  
do (Susp)  
*and as (she) runs away, (she) collides with Chaplin*
- (4) KAZ (III)  
et # comme ça il est AUSSI arrêté.  
et il a fait monter dans le petit camion.  
*and # this way he is ALSO arrested and he pulled up (é) in the small truck*
- (5) NAO (II)  
chaplin [e prā] à voiture par police.  
*chaplin is taken to (the) car by (the) police*

Our study aimed at addressing the questions raised above:

- (1) The results in both referential domains of time and space confirm that the structure of the language used and its level of proficiency by a speaker affect the conceptualization of the task and the mode of reference. The referential strategies adopted in L1 and L3 for the expression of time and space are noticeably divergent. In L3, the expressed temporal and spatial relations reflect a prototypical treatment of the task. The forms selected in L3 are then compatible with the use of L1 and sometimes of L2. They are neutral, nonlanguage-specific means, which adapt the best to a 'neutral' conceptualization of the task. Systematic comparisons with productions of French-speaking native speakers in the same task would allow us to check these conclusions.
- (2) L2 serves as an intermediate language to construct hypotheses about the TL use, as far as the learner establishes a link between both foreign systems and treats his L2 as a language typologically close to L3 according to his 'psychotypology' (cf. Kellerman, 1983). English is as French a language in course of appropriation and is judged a better source of loan than the L1. This phenomenon is particularly striking in the productions of learners who declared themselves rather proficient in English. These results remain to be confirmed with a more objective assessment of L2 proficiency. As for the influence of L1, it clearly appears only for the transfer of functions which are expressed in the three languages (ex: perfective).
- (3) The impact of the school context arises through phenomena of formal overcorrection (ex: redundant use of the past in the advanced group).

Nevertheless, the progression described across the three groups, as regards the organization of temporality and spatiality, looks like the one attested in other studies of SLA with untutored learners, supporting the idea that the learner's general cognitive capacities play a significant role. The Japanese learners of this study developed an interlanguage that is partially independent from the input they received.

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