Markedness and the evolution of binary spatial deictics:
French *voilà* and *voici*

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0. Introduction

This paper investigates the evolution of the French deictic demonstratives *voilà* 'there is' and *voici* 'here is' with respect to asymmetries in the distribution of the two terms. Critical in this study is the observation that these demonstratives constitute radial categories of related senses. We begin by introducing the phenomenon of radial categories in general, and then move on to a description of the radial category structure of the French deictic demonstrative *voilà* 'there is.' In its central (spatial) case, *voilà* has usurped some of the semantic ground of *voici* 'here is.' In some of their extended senses, such as the discourse case, *voilà* and *voici* maintain distinct semantics, while in other extended senses, such as the paragon case, only *voilà* is used. Previous accounts of the encroachment of *voilà* over *voici* invoke markedness, but these accounts fail to explain how these lexical items pattern in extensions. We suggest that incorporation of the pragmatic functions of particular senses and the metaphorical extensions from which they derive can explain this phenomenon.

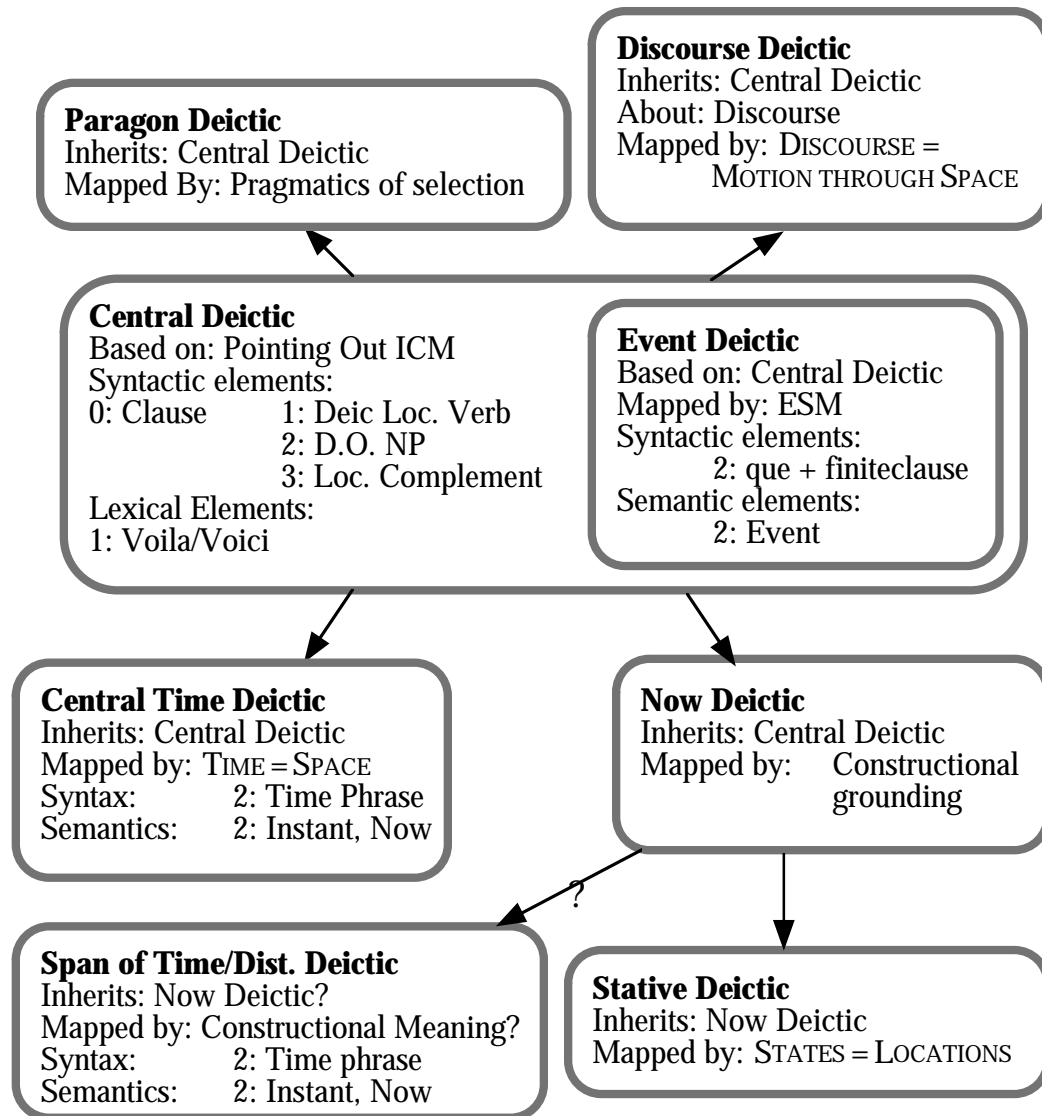## 1. French deictic demonstratives
1.1. The radial category of *voilà*

Radial Categories (Lakoff 1987, Brugman 1981, Lindner 1981) are linguistic categories where the connections between the senses of a word or construction are established by general extension mechanisms such as metonymy, metaphor, constructional grounding, syntactic blends, and the pragmatics of communicative acts. A classic example of such a category is the English category *mother* (Lakoff 1987), which has a central sense, including such characteristics as nurturance, contribution of genetic material, marriage to the father, and so on. The category also includes extensions from the central sense, such as *adoptive mother*, *biological mother*, etc., which modify characteristics of the central case. Additionally, extensions from a central case can themselves act as sources of subsequent extensions, as shown for Dyirbal noun classes, such as *balan*, which has among its meanings 'women', 'fire', and 'dangerous things' (Dixon 1982). Studies of radial category structures in language have determined that many levels of linguistic elements can be felicitously described as such: from the phoneme (Jaeger 1980) to grammatical categories, such as subject (Van Oosten 1986), to lexical items (Cienki 1998), to grammatical constructions (Goldberg 1995).

The French deictic demonstrative *voilà* 'there is' constitutes a radial category (1), whose central meaning is a spatial one that points out (☞) an object in the perceptual field of the speaker (Bergen and Plauché to appear). The central sense of *voilà* (2) is extended to the domains of discourse (3), time, evaluation, and others through the mechanisms described above. For

example, *voilà* and *voici* can point out not only a physical object (2), but also an element of the ongoing discourse (3). This is motivated by a metaphorical mapping from the domain of space to the domain of discourse that is not specific to this lexical item, but can be found elsewhere in French (4) and in other languages.

(1)   Radial category of *voilà.* (Bergen and Plauché to appear)

Discourse Deictic
Inherits: Central Deictic
About: Discourse
Mapped by: DISCOURSE =
        MOTION THROUGH SPACE

Paragon Deictic
Inherits: Central Deictic
Mapped By: Pragmatics of selection

Central Deictic
Based on: Pointing Out ICM
Syntactic elements:
0: Clause   1: Deic Loc. Verb
                 2: D.O. NP
                 3: Loc. Complement
Lexical Elements:
1: Voila/Voici

Event Deictic
Based on: Central Deictic
Mapped by: ESM
Syntactic elements:
        2: que + finiteclause
Semantic elements:
        2: Event

Central Time Deictic
Inherits: Central Deictic
Mapped by: TIME = SPACE
Syntax: 2: Time Phrase
Semantics: 2: Instant, Now

Now Deictic
Inherits: Central Deictic
Mapped by: Constructional
              grounding

Span of Time/Dist. Deictic
Inherits: Now Deictic?
Mapped by: Constructional Meaning?
Syntax: 2: Time phrase
Semantics: 2: Instant, Now

Stative Deictic
Inherits: Now Deictic
Mapped by: STATES = LOCATIONS

(2)   (a)   ***Voilà** les clés que tu cherchais.*
              There are the keys you were looking for.
       (b)   ***Voici** son sac à nain.*
              Here's his dwarf bag.

(3)   (a)   ***Voici*** *deux exemples.*
            Here are two examples (to come).
      (b)   ***Voilà*** *un bon point.*
            There's a good point (that's just been made).

(4)   (a)   *Quand est-ce qu'on va **arriver à** la partie interessante de l'histoire?*
            When are we going to **get to** the interesting part of the story?
      (b)   *Je n'ai pas pu **suivre** la discussion.*
            I couldn't **follow** the discussion.

1.2.   Historical development

Voilà and *voici* derived historically from a composition of the imperative of *voir* 'to see' and the locative adverbs *là* 'there' and *ci* 'here'(5). They appear first as fixed lexical forms in the 13th to 15th century (Rey 1995).

(5)   ***Voilà***   from   ***vois*** 'see!' and ***là*** 'there'
      Voici   from   ***vois*** 'see!' and ***ci*** 'here'

The historically original senses of *voilà* and *voici* are thus explicitly imperative ones. They call the attention of the interlocutor to some element in the present location of the conversants by telling the interlocutor to look at a thing in a location. This imperative function is preserved in Modern French in the central (spatial) case (2).

In Modern French, especially among younger speakers, *voilà* is generally preferred over *voici* in the central case. This is part of a larger trend in French of distal spatial deictics taking over the uses associated with their proximal counterparts (Smith 1995). For example, speakers use the deictic locative adverb *là* 'there' in the place of *ici* 'here' even when the reference place is explicitly encoded elsewhere in the utterance as referring to the location of the speaker (6).

(6)   *Viens là, Lulu, pourque je te mouche!*!
      Come here, Lulu, so I can blow your nose! (lit. 'Come there')

This follows a cross-linguistic trend for binary deictic systems to develop usage asymmetries (e.g. English, German, French, and Russian). To illustrate this trend in French, let us consider corpus evidence taken from the ARTFL database (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/ARTFL/). The ARTFL (American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language) is a corpus of literature from the 16th through the 20th century, ending in the 1960's. Thus, although it will not show the most recent trends of spoken French, it is an excellent source for the historical development of these forms over the last five centuries. In (7), the number of each of these forms out of 10,000 tokens is plotted by century.

(7) Absolute use of *voilà* and *voici* over time
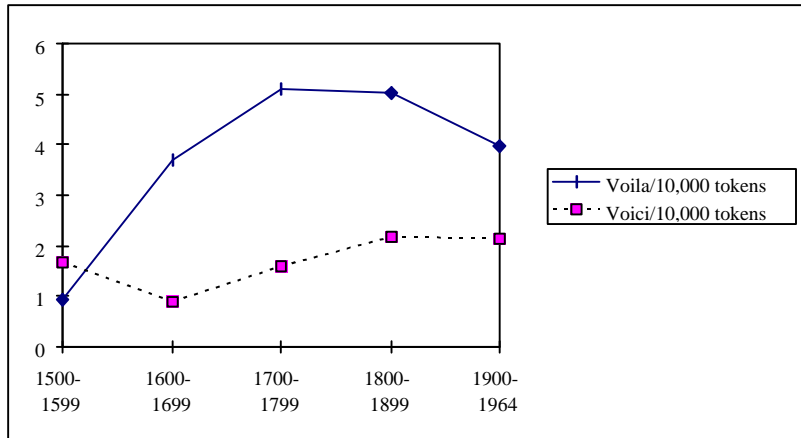
This sample demonstrates that from the beginning of these fixed forms (in the 14th to 15th centuries), a usage asymmetry (at least in terms of simple frequency) developed between *voilà* and *voici*. Although this corpus is limited to literature, the usage asymmetry we observe in it correlates with asymmetries found in modern spoken French.

2. Markedness
2.1. Spatial deictics and markedness

The explanation for the primacy of the distal form, *voilà*, over the proximal form, *voici*, in previous literature is based essentially on the concept of markedness, where spatial distals are deemed "unmarked" and proximals "marked" for perceptual (Clark 1973) or semantic (Lyons 1975) reasons (8).

(8) *Voilà, voici,* and markedness
        Voilà (distal)   unmarked   [ ]
        Voici (proximal) marked   [+proximal]

The theoretical construct of markedness is an asymmetric relationship between forms which is assessed by various measures, including frequency and semantic generality (Greenberg 1966), elegance and generality of description (Chomsky & Halle 1968), use in neutral contexts, and zero structural expression (Bierwisch 1967). In various frameworks, unmarked elements are more frequent, more semantically general, are used in neutral contexts, and have the shortest and or most morphologically simple expression. Marked counterparts are in opposition to unmarked forms on each of these parameters.

Furthermore, some theorists claim that there are certain concepts that are inherently marked or unmarked, which give rise to universal semantic asymmetries (Piaget 1967, Clark 1973). We will show that the idea of universality of markedness fails for the case of French deictic demonstratives.

2.2. Problems with the markedness approach

Not only are the measures described above for assessing markedness controversial and varied, but additionally they fail to account for language-specific differences in asymmetries. They also fail to explain why markedness patterns differ across radial category extensions.

First, there are languages like Russian with deictic systems in which the <u>proximal</u> and not the distal element becomes more common, or is unmarked (9). At the very least, a theory of markedness must be able to account for language-specific differences. Basing the markedness of lexical items in a given language on universal semantic asymmetries seems impossible for deictic demonstratives, since opposite markedness on elements expressing essentially the same semantics appears in different languages.

(9) *Vot*, *von*, and markedness
        Vot (proximal)   unmarked
        Von (distal)   marked

The previous accounts also fail to explain differences in markedness patterns in different extensions of the radial categories of deictic demonstratives. With some extensions, only the unmarked element of the central sense (or source domain) is mapped to a target domain. In others, both the marked and unmarked elements are mapped to the target domain. We will present an example of each of these phenomena and offer an explanation that can account for both patterns.

2.2.1. Extension of unmarked element only: the paragon case

One use of *voilà* has the specific meaning of picking out one or more elements from a group, usually because they are particularly exemplary of that category (10). This case can be described as an extension from the central case to the domain of category membership evaluation via the pragmatics of selection (Bergen and Plauché to appear). (Explicitly identifying an entity as a member of a given category can entail an assertion of the "goodness of membership" of that entity in the category.) The paragon *voilà* construction is usually associated with a particular intonation pattern, putting sentential stress on *voilà*. This extension works very much the same way in English (translations in 10).

(10)   (a) ***Voilà*** *une bonne idée*.
               There's a good idea.
         (b) ***Voilà*** *de la bonne littérature*.
               Now **there's** good literature.
         (c) *En **voilà** des étudiants!*
               Now **there** are some students (for you)!

The crucial point to note is that *voici*, the marked, proximal deictic cannot be used in this sense. Only the unmarked form, *voilà*, is mapped to the paragon domain. Previous accounts of this kind of asymmetry argue that markedness determines lexical choice in metaphorical extensions (Lakoff 1987, Clark 1973). In an analysis of English, which has the same ranking of proximal and distal deictics as French, Lakoff (1987) suggests that *there* and not *here* is inherited from the deictic (source domain) and mapped to the existential (target domain) and other

extended sense of *there* constructions because *there* is the unmarked member of the binary pair (11).

(11) English 'There' (Lakoff 1987)
    (a) Central Deictic
        There's a dog wearing a little sweater.
        Here's your soggy cuttlefish.
    (b) Existential
        There's a dog on the porch.
        *__Here__'s a cuttlefish on the porch.

The Paragon case in French and English is the norm in that the unmarked element is the only element to be mapped to a metaphorical target domain.

2.2.2. Extension of both marked and unmarked elements: the discourse deictic

Unlike the paragon case described above (2.2.1.), for some metaphorically extended senses of *voilà* and *voici*, such as the one in the domain of discourse deixis, both the proximal and distal elements of the source domain are mapped (12). The metaphors that motivate this mapping are: DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE, DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES, DISCOURSE IS MOTION ALONG A PATH, IMMEDIATELY PAST DISCOURSE IS IN OUR PRESENCE AT A DISTANCE FROM US, DISCOURSE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS MOVING TOWARDS US (Lakoff 1987, Clark 1973).

(12)   (a) *__Voici__ comment on rase un chat...*
        Here's how you shave a cat...
    (b) *__Voilà__ pourquoi notre fille est muette.*
        That's why our daughter is mute.

As has been previously shown for other languages (Lakoff 1987, Fillmore 1997), the proximal form, *voici*, is used to indicate discourse elements that will occur in the near future, whereas the distal form, *voilà*, points to discourse elements that occurred in the recent past (13).

(13) Metaphorical mapping from central to discourse senses
      voici (proximal) →   future discourse
      voilà (distal)   →   prior discourse

Traditional accounts of usage asymmetries in extensions have no way of dealing with the differences between extensions like the paragon case, where only the unmarked element is mapped, and extensions like the discourse case, where both elements are mapped. We argue in the rest of this paper that the semantic content of the target domains of extensions dictates these different extension patterns.

2.3. Particularities of the discourse domain

Deictics in discourse serve to bracket speech. Many languages have lexical items for opening and closing speech elements. Even if only one lexical item is mapped from the central domain to

the discourse domain, as in the case of Russian, the two senses of opening and closing maintain their distinction, in this case through distinct intonation. When referring to a future discourse element, *vot* 'here is', has high, level intonation without a pause (*vot-1*). When closing a topic, i.e. referring to a past discourse unit, *vot* is produced with falling intonation and is followed by a pause (*vot-2*) (Grenoble and Riley 1996).

In (14), we see the distribution of deictic demonstratives in the central and discourse domains for English, French and Russian. In all three languages, some distinction is encoded in the discourse domain between cataphoric and anaphoric reference. In English and in French the same forms that encode a proximal/distal distinction in the spatial sense are used to express cataphoric and anaphoric reference in the discourse domain. In Russian, despite the use of only the unmarked (bolded) central sense element, *vot*, in the discourse domain, the anaphoric/cataphoric distinction is retained by the use of distinct intonational patterns (*vot-1* and *vot-2*).

(14) Extension to discourse

		English	French	Russian
Central	Proximal	here	*voici/voilà*	***vot***
	Distal	**there**	***voilà***	*von/vot*
Discourse	Cataphoric	here	*voici/voilà*	*vot-1*
	Anaphoric	there	*voilà*	*vot-2*

The domain of discourse or the metaphorical mappings to the domain of discourse encode a salient distinction between past speech and future speech. One possible scenario is that the proximal/distal distinction is mapped in its entirety to all extensions. This distinction is subsequently historically retained in domains where it is useful but lost in domains in which the distinction serves no purpose. A second potential explanation is that certain metaphors pick out relevant semantic aspects of the source domain (such as relative distance from the speaker), in the metaphors that map to particular domains, leading to the extension of a distinction or not. Either way, the salient distinction needed in the discourse domain explains why in English and French (and many other languages) we find both the marked and unmarked elements in this domain. Crucially, the domain of paragon selection only involves a single referent and no possibility or requirement of distinguishing between paragons.

3. The Russian discourse case: extension of unmarked member only

Before going on, we should address the case of the Russian discourse domain. Specifically, if discourse encodes a salient binary distinction, why is only the unmarked deictic demonstrative mapped to the discourse domain in Russian? We claim that the answer lies in the degree of transparency of the morphemes involved and the retention of the proximal/distal distinction in deictics and in general in the language under consideration.

Consider the relationship between spatial deictic demonstratives, discourse deictics, and spatial locatives in English, French, and Russian (15). In Russian, there is little distinction between proximal and distal in the central spatial demonstratives or elsewhere: the proximal is used preferentially in almost all contexts (Grenoble and Riley 1996). For example, in the contrasting forms, *ètot / tot* 'that'/'this', *ètot* 'that' is only used when there is an explicit contrast. Additionally, the deictic demonstratives in Russian are not morphologically related to the spatial deictic locatives. In French, there is little proximal/distal distinction in the spatial demonstratives,

but they are morphologically transparent to, and related to distinct forms *ici* 'here' and *là* 'there'. In English, the proximal/distal distinction is retained in deictic adverbials and these forms are identical to their demonstrative counterparts.

(15) Extensions to discourse and related forms

		English	**French**	**Russian**
Central	Proximal	here	*voici/voilà*	***vot***
	Distal	**there**	***voilà***	*von/vot*
Discourse	Cataphoric	here	*voici/voilà*	*vot-1*
	Anaphoric	there	*voilà*	*vot-2*
Spatial Locatives		here/there	*ici/là/là-bas*	*tam/tut/zdes'*

A schematic of the degree of proximal/distal distinctions in the central case, the discourse case, and in general is given below by language (16). In English, (a) the proximal/distal distinction is retained in the central deictic and elsewhere, and (b) there is a very high degree of semantic transparency between the deictic demonstratives and the deictic locatives. In French, the proximal/distal distinction is maintained only to a limited extent in the spatial domain, but morphological transparency of the deictic demonstratives to their deictic locative counterparts, which also retain a proximal/distal distinction to some degree, permits the usage of these contrastive forms in the metaphorical extension to the domain of discourse. Finally, Russian does not preserve the proximal/distal distinction with the deictic demonstratives, nor is there any overt morphological relation between these forms and deictic locatives. Even if there were, the deictic locatives themselves seem to encode very little distinction between proximal and distal senses.

(16) Semantic transparency

	English	**French**	**Russian**
Transparency of Demonstrative	identical	transparent	opaque or unrelated
±prox in general	yes	yes	attenuating
±prox in central	yes	attenuating	attenuating
±prox in discourse	yes	some	no

Our claim is that the difference in the retention of a lexical distinction in the discourse domain is due to (a) the retention of a proximal/distal distinction in the deictic demonstratives of the source domain and (b) the morphological transparency of the deictic demonstratives. French and Russian are distinguished from English in the degree to which the proximal/distal distinction is attenuating in the central deictic demonstrative. However, Russian and French differ from one another in the transparency of their deictics relative to other spatial locatives and in the extent to which the proximal/distal distinction is maintained elsewhere in the spatial domain.

Further investigation into the importance of transparency in radial category extensions is beyond the scope of this paper, but we believe it to be an interesting potential topic for further research.

4. Conclusion: Target Domain and/or mappings maintain semantic distinctions

The French deictic demonstratives *voilà* 'there is' and *voici* 'here is' have developed asymmetries in their distribution that differ in different extensions of their radial categories. We have shown that previous accounts of the encroachment of *voilà* over *voici* invoking markedness fail to explain why some extensions map only the unmarked form from the source domain, while others map both. We have argued that the pragmatic functions of particular senses and the metaphorical extensions from which they derive form the basis for the differences in the way these forms are mapped.

There are properties of the expressed mechanisms required for discourse that dictate the possible mappings to this domain. This can be explained from two perspectives. The first is that metaphors for discourse pick out a distinction which is present in the spatial domain (namely, location relative to the speaker) which is not picked out by metaphors for other domains (e.g. Paragon) that also have the spatial sense as the source domain. Thus, one could argue that because these same metaphors exist in different languages, discourse is construed similarly (things in the future are in front of the observer and past speech is behind the observer), which becomes an important distinction for that domain, whether or not it is encoded in these forms.

It is also possible that the domain of discourse itself has requirements which are fulfilled by certain mappings and not by others. Thus, the target domain structure of the discourse domain naturally selects metaphors that will encode a binary distinction. And it is precisely these requirements that surface in languages like Russian, which encode a binary distinction despite the lack of a correlated distinction in the spatial domain.

Either way, the special requirements of the target domain (of discourse) and/or its mappings dictate the retention of a semantic distinction whose source domain correlate (the spatial domain) may no longer exist.

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