



Research Article

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The Role of Inferencing in Semantic/ Pragmatic Cyclicity: the Case of Latin NUNC and French *or/maintenant*

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Abstract: In this paper, I analyze the evolution of the Latin adverb/discourse marker NUNC and its Old and Modern French equivalents, *or* and *maintenant*, markers whose content-level source meanings are in all cases equivalent to English *now*. The analysis pays particular attention to the role of metonymic inference, and to bridging contexts. Showing that the three etymologically unrelated markers have remarkably similar (but crucially not identical) uses, both as temporal adjuncts and as pragmatic markers of various types, I argue that the diachronic changes undergone by these three items constitute a semantic/pragmatic cycle of a type that I call “onomasiological” (cf. Hansen 2015, fc). I suggest that cyclic developments at the level of semantics and pragmatics take place because source items that are semantically similar will favor similar types of contextual inferences. Furthermore, the fact that the range of uses of the items under consideration is not necessarily exactly identical from one cycle to the next supports an instructional view of semantics, which affords a central role in the process of meaning construction precisely to inferencing.

Keywords: Pragmaticalization, Language change, Cyclicity, Inferences, Discourse markers

1 Introduction

In this paper, I analyze the evolution of the Latin adverb/discourse marker NUNC and its Old and Modern French equivalents, *or* and *maintenant*, markers whose content-level source meanings are in all cases equivalent to English *now*. The analysis pays particular attention to the role of metonymic inference, and to bridging contexts. I argue that the diachronic changes undergone by these three items constitute a semantic/pragmatic cycle of a type that I call “onomasiological” (cf. Hansen 2015, fc).

The paper is structured as follows: After a brief discussion of grammaticalization cycles, section 2 introduces the relatively recently discovered phenomenon of cyclicity in semantic/pragmatic change (cf. Hansen 2014, Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014), positing a basic distinction between semasiological and onomasiological cycles. Section 3 presents a case study illustrating onomasiological cyclicity, with section 3.1 discussing the meaning and uses of Latin NUNC (‘now’), section 3.2 those of (Old) French *or*, while section 3.3 treats *maintenant*. I show that the three etymologically unrelated markers have remarkably similar (albeit not identical) uses, both as temporal adjuncts and as pragmatic markers of various types. In the case of both *or* and *maintenant*, the latter uses are shown to have developed diachronically from the temporal uses,

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via processes of inference. Section 4 argues that the existence of semantic/pragmatic cycles constitutes evidence that the Uniformitarian Principle is applicable to diachronic semantics and pragmatics. I suggest that such cycles take place because source items that are semantically similar will favor similar types of contextual inferences. At the same time, the fact that the range of uses of the items under consideration is not necessarily exactly identical from one cycle to the next supports an instructional view of semantics, which affords a central role in the process of meaning construction precisely to inferencing.

2 Cyclicity in semantic/pragmatic change

2.1 Cycles of grammaticalization

It has been known since at least the early 20th century that some forms of grammatical change occur in quasi-cyclic patterns across languages (cf. von der Gabelentz 1901: 256; Jespersen 1917: 4; Meillet 1921: 140). The most widely known instance of this type of pattern is probably the Jespersen Cycle (so named, after Otto Jespersen, by Dahl 1979: 88), which describes the evolution of clause negation across a number of languages, prominently but not exclusively European languages. More recently, van Gelderen (2011) has posited the existence of at least seven different types of grammaticalization cycles that can be identified as commonly occurring across languages. A couple of simple examples from French will serve to show what is meant by a grammaticalization cycle:

- (1) [Old French]
 Se (**je**) ne li di
 if-CONJ SBJ.1.SG NEG DAT.3.SG say-PRS.IND.1.SG
- (2) [Classical and Modern Standard French]
 Si **je** ne le lui dis pas
 if-CONJ SBJ.CL.1.SG NEG ACC.CL.3.SG DAT.CL.3.SG say-PRS.IND.1.SG NEG
- (3) [Contemporary colloquial French]
 Si (**moi**) **je** le lui dis pas
 if-CONJ PRON.1.SG SBJ.CL.1.SG ACC.CL.3.SG DAT.CL.3.SG say-PRS.IND.1.SG NEG
 ‘If I don’t say it to him/her’

The underlined and bold items in these examples illustrate, respectively, the Jespersen Cycle (or “Negative Cycle” in van Gelderen’s terms) and the Subject Cycle.

Starting with the former, we see that negation in the earliest stages of French was normally expressed by a single preverbal marker *ne* (< Lat. NON), cf. (1) above. However, with increasing frequency throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, this preverbal marker became reinforced by a postverbal marker. Although the use of postverbal markers was initially pragmatically constrained (Hansen 2009), the form *pas* (and to a lesser extent *point*) was further grammaticalized such that, by the Classical period (17th-18th c.), the standard form of clause negation was obligatorily bipartite, *ne...pas* embracing the finite verb, as in (2).

More recently, the preverbal negative marker is typically dropped in colloquial speech, leaving postverbal *pas* to express clause negation on its own, as in (3). A possible next stage might see *pas* move into the preverbal position originally occupied by *ne*, as has happened in infinitival clauses, cf. (4) below. There are, however, no signs of such a development taking place in finite clauses at present.

- (4) [Contemporary colloquial French]
 Fais gaffe de pas attraper froid!
 Be-careful-IMP.2.SG INF.MRKR NEG catch-INF cold
 ‘Be careful not to catch cold!’

Examples (1)-(3) also illustrate a diachronic cycle of subject marking. Thus, in Old French, as seen in (1), the subject was obligatorily expressed by an inflectional person suffix on the finite verb. This person suffix could be optionally reinforced by a subject pronoun. The use of subject pronouns was initially pragmatically constrained, but by the end of the Medieval period, their presence had become obligatory in all contexts, and they had become cliticized to the verb, whereas the inflectional endings that are still preserved in Modern written French were for the most part no longer pronounced (cf. (2)). Thus, in spoken French at least, subject clitics gradually took over the function of marking the subject in finite clauses, a role that could no longer be fulfilled by the person inflections on the verb.

In spoken colloquial French, it is nowadays common, albeit optional, for subject clitics to be reinforced by unbound, pragmatically constrained, pronominal forms, as seen in (3), and the clitics have been argued to have developed inflectional status, and to be, broadly speaking, prefixal equivalents of the suffixal pattern of subject marking inherited from Latin.

In both cases, we thus have a series of changes by which an original (morpho)syntactic marker is first reinforced by a new type of marker, which initially occurs only in a subset of contexts, but which gradually spreads across all contexts, whereas use of the original marker declines. In both cases, the end result is functionally similar to the source construction, without the two being fully identical in structural terms. Although it has become the norm in the linguistics literature to describe such developments as “cycles”, this lack of complete identity between the beginning and the end stages means that they are therefore in fact more akin to spirals, as was observed already by early scholars such as von der Gabelentz (1901: 256) and Meillet (1921: 140).

2.2 Semantic/pragmatic cycles

In recent work, both Hansen (2014, 2015, *fc*) and, independently, Ghezzi & Molinelli (2014) have posited the existence of broadly comparable cyclic developments at the level of semantic/pragmatic change.

Not least thanks to the pioneering work of Elizabeth Traugott (e.g. Traugott & Dasher 2002), it is by now well-known that context-level, or “pragmatic”, markers of various kinds, typically originate diachronically in items whose meaning contribution is located at the content level. Hansen (2008: 16) defines content-level uses of linguistic expressions as uses in which those expressions:

bear saliently either on a state-of-affairs in some real or imagined world that is referred to in their host clause or on the relation between that state-of-affairs and other (real or imagined) states-of-affairs.

Context-level uses, on the other hand, are defined as uses that:

express speakers’ comments on the relation between described states-of-affairs and the discourse itself (including, but not limited to, the subjective attitudes to the states-of-affairs in question that may be entertained by either the speaker, the hearer or some relevant third party).

When content-level expressions develop context-level meanings and uses diachronically, we may consider that they have been subject to “pragmaticalization” (e.g. Hansen 2008: 58ff), in contradistinction to “grammaticalized” elements such as those discussed in section 2.1 above.

Semantic/pragmatic cycles (Hansen 2014), or “cycles of pragmaticalization” (Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014), are thus found when the evolution from a particular type of content-level meaning or function to one or more particular types of context-level meanings or functions takes place more than once within a given language and/or across two languages, one of which is the direct descendant of the other. This will be illustrated by concrete examples presently.

Based on existing studies, Hansen (2015, *fc*) posits that this kind of cycle can take two different forms, corresponding to the two basic perspectives one can take on the relation between linguistic meaning and linguistic form, such that a given semantic/pragmatic cycle can be either semasiological or onomasiological in nature.

2.2.1 Semasiological cyclicality

The semasiological perspective takes its point of departure in a specific linguistic form in a given language and studies the uses to which that form is put. Accordingly, I define a semasiological cycle as a case where one and the same linguistic form, or two or more etymologically closely related forms, repeatedly develop(s) similar context-level functions from a similar point of departure at the content level.

As an example of a semasiological cycle, Hansen (2014) adduces the case of Latin *IAM* ('[as of] now') and its direct descendants, Old French *ja* and Modern French *déjà* (< *dès* 'as of' + *ja*). The study shows in some detail that, from similar temporal/aspectual content-level source meanings, all three particles developed significantly overlapping – but crucially not identical – ranges of context-level functions. The reader is referred to the original study for in-depth analysis of the precise meanings and functions of the three particles. What is important here is that, while the diachrony is subject to caution in the case of Latin, both the French data and etymological considerations concerning Latin strongly suggest that the three particles did not possess their full range of functions from the outset, but that those ranges developed gradually over time, some senses arising centuries after the older marker had disappeared. The fact that the functional range of each particle is not exactly the same further supports this idea, showing that it cannot be assumed that Old French *ja* simply took over the functions of Latin *IAM*, nor that Modern French *déjà* is just a morphologically reinforced, but otherwise straightforward continuation of *ja*. Rather, each linguistic stage represents a renewed instance of a very similar semantic/pragmatic evolution.

2.2.2 Onomasiological cyclicality

In contradistinction to semasiology, the onomasiological perspective takes its point of departure in a particular linguistic meaning or function and aims to discover the formal means by which that meaning or function can be expressed in a given language. An onomasiological cycle is therefore defined by Hansen (2015, fc) as a case where a similar context-level meaning or function (or a similar set of such meanings/functions) is repeatedly renewed, within one language or across two languages, one of which is a direct descendant of the other, by etymologically unrelated forms with similar content-level meanings.

Although they do not speak of it specifically as an onomasiological cycle, Ghezzi & Molinelli's (2014) study of the evolution from Latin *QUAESO* ('I pray/request') to Modern Italian *prego* (< Lat. *PRECOR* 'I pray') can be considered to illustrate this type of semantic/pragmatic cycle. While etymologically unrelated, the verb forms in question have very similar content-level meanings and uses in the two languages, and in both cases, they develop very similar context-level uses as pragmatic markers signaling polite requests.

In the remainder of this paper, I will likewise focus on a case study involving an onomasiological cycle. The particular cycle in question involves linguistic forms which, like *IAM* > *ja* > *déjà* (cf. section 2.2.1), but unlike *QUAESO* > *prego*, are all adverbs in the morphosyntactic sense. Thus, the case study presented in section 3 below serves to emphasize the essential parallelism between semasiological cycles like *IAM* > *ja* > *déjà* and onomasiological cycles with even greater clarity. In keeping with the theme of the present special issue, the analysis will pay particular attention to the role of contextual inferencing in the evolution of the three markers under consideration.

3 Latin *NUNC* > Old French *or* > Modern French *maintenant*: an onomasiological cycle of pragmaticalization

Unlike *IAM*, the Latin particle *NUNC* ('now') is not carried over into Old French, but is replaced in that language by an etymologically unrelated form, *or* (< Lat. *HA(C) HORA*, 'at this hour'). Subsequently, the language sees the rise of a third form, *maintenant* (< Lat. gerund *MANU TENENDO*, 'while holding in the hand'), which replaces *or* in at least one of its uses as early as the Medieval period.

Each of the three adverbs has a temporal, content-level source meaning, and over time each develops a range of remarkably similar context-level meanings. Sections 3.1-3.3 consider the three in turn, starting with the chronologically oldest one, *NUNC*.

3.1 The functions of *NUNC*

On the basis of Risselada (1996) and Lewis & Short (1879), we may posit seven different uses of this particle. These seven functions can be distributed into two broad groups, viz. those that are temporal vs those that are non-temporal in meaning.

3.1.1 Temporal uses of *NUNC*

Among the temporal uses, in which *NUNC* functions as an adjunct, the following four can be identified:

- (i) A deictic temporal use, in which the adverb refers to a point or period in time coinciding with or including the moment of speech. This is exemplified in (5) below.
 - (ii) A “transposed-present” use, in which *NUNC* is used in narrative (typically past-time) contexts, to express a temporal relation between the state-of-affairs described by the host clause and other states-of-affairs described in the surrounding discourse. More precisely, *NUNC* refers to the present stage of the narration. This use is exemplified in (6) below.
 - (iii) A correlative use, *NUNC*..., *NUNC*..., in which the particle variously translates as ‘now..., now...’, ‘one moment..., the next...’, ‘at one time..., at another time...’, or ‘sometimes..., sometimes...’, illustrated in (7).
 - (iv) A “metadiscursive” temporal use, in which *NUNC* retains its temporal sense, but simultaneously acts as a discourse-structuring device in monological discourse, as in (8). Risselada (1996: 117) notes that in this use, *NUNC* is accompanied by metadiscursive comments and often contrasts with a temporal (typically past-time) adjunct in an adjacent clause. In (8), the utterance preceding the *NUNC*-marked utterance constitutes precisely such a metacomment, and contains the adjunct *antea* (‘previously’, underscored), which contrasts temporally with *nunc*. Moreover, the imperative *accipite* (‘hear’, ‘receive’), to which *NUNC* is attached in this example, similarly fulfils a metadiscursive function.
- (5) *ita ancilla mea quae fuit hodie, sua nunc est* (Plautus, *Per.* 472, 3rd-2nd c. BC – from Risselada 1996: 110)
‘thus the servant girl who was mine until today is **now** free’
- (6) *tris imbris torti radios, tris nubis aquosae / addiderant, rutuli tris ignis et alitis Austri. / fulgores nunc terrificos sonitumque metumque / miscebant operi flammisque sequacibus iras.* (Vergil, *Aen.* 8.429-32, 1st c. BC-1st c. AD – from Risselada 1996: 116)
‘three rays of twisted hails had they added to it, three of watery cloud, three of ruddy flame and the winged southern wind. **Now** they were blending with the work frightful flashes, sounds, and fear, and wrath with pursuing flames.’
- (7) *tribuni plebis nunc fraudem, nunc neglegentiam consulum accusabant* (Livy, 4.12, 1st c. BC-1st c. AD – from Perseus)
‘the people’s tribunes **sometimes** accused the consul of fraud, **sometimes** of neglect’
- (8) *dixi iam antea me non omnia istius quae in hoc genere essent enumeratum, sed electurum ea quae maxime excellere. accipite nunc aliud eius facinus nobile...* (Cicero, *Ver.* 2.2.82, 1st c. BC – from Risselada 1996: 118)
‘I have already said previously that I won’t enumerate all his deeds of this kind, but will choose the most remarkable. Hear now about another one of his well-known exploits...’

Risselada (1996: 112) describes the temporal deictic use as the “most straightforward” of the uses of *NUNC*, and indeed it does seem to be the most basic one, from which each of the other three can be derived.

Thus, the second, transposed-present, use seems to be a projection of the deictic use onto a narrative temporal axis which mimics the progression of time in the world of the narrator. Or to put it differently, the time of utterance, expressed by deictic NUNC, is projected in the transposed use of the particle onto the time of consciousness/cognition of the narrator. As this type of use appears to be common to deictic adverbs meaning ‘now’ across at least the subset of languages that I am familiar with, I see no reason to posit the transposed use as a separately coded meaning of NUNC at the level of *langue*. Rather, the specific interpretation given to transposed NUNC can be seen as resulting from the combination of the basic deictic meaning with the narrative context in which it occurs.

The correlative use of NUNC seen in (7), on the other hand, is likely to be a separately coded sense. For one thing, it is not necessarily a possible use of proximal temporal deictics across languages. Secondly, in many contexts, NUNC...NUNC... seems to have subjective, evaluative component of expressing inconsistent and erratic behavior on the part of the subject of the sentence. While this use is in itself non-deictic, it seems plausible that it originates in an inference from uses of deictic NUNC in contexts where an unfolding series of successive events are described as they take place, on the model of “*nunc p, nunc q, nunc r, ...*” Contemporary live sports commentary is an obvious example of such a discourse structure. Given that time progresses, be it ever so slightly, with each instance of NUNC in that type of discourse, the inference from ‘now...now’ to ‘at one time...at another time’ is easily made. The fact that temporal progression from one “now” to the next is slight in the proposed source construction also accounts for the evaluative nuance often conveyed by correlative NUNC: in many contexts, the inferential step from rapidly changing behavior to unpredictable behavior, and from there to erratic behavior, is easily taken. Where a sense of iteration or habituality is conveyed by co- and/or context, we arrive at the ‘sometimes...sometimes’ interpretation seen in (7), where the imperfective past tense verb form *accusabant* (‘accused’) expresses precisely that the types of events described were habitual rather than one-off occurrences at the time of reference.

Finally, the metadiscursive, topic-shifting use seen in (8) seems to be essentially one in which deictic NUNC is used to comment directly on the contemporaneous unfolding of the discourse itself, as opposed to events unfolding in the extralinguistic world. The scope of the particle remains at the level of the host proposition, due to the speaker’s accompanying metacomments. Like the transposed-present use, this use is probably not usefully described as an independently coded sense of NUNC, but can be seen as a contextual modulation of the basic deictic sense.

3.1.2 Non-temporal, discourse-marking uses of NUNC

The temporal uses of NUNC can all be considered as relevant to the content level of the host utterance. The marker’s non-temporal uses, on the other hand, belong at the context level. In these uses, NUNC fits Hansen’s (1998: 73) definition of discourse markers, in as much as its primary function is connective and it has variable scope. On Risselada’s (1996: 122) analysis, NUNC in its non-temporal uses marks shifts to a last, typically most salient, subordinate unit of discourse. Such shifts may be of three types, illustrated below:

- (i) A shift from a digression back to the main point, cf. (9).
- (ii) A shift from a counterfactual statement or statements to a contrasting factual statement, cf. (10).
- (iii) A shift from one type of interactional move to another (typically resultant) move, cf. (11).

- (9) [Account of how Verres had betrayed Cn Carbo] etenim si haec perturbare ac permiscere volumus totam vitam periculosam, invidiosam, infestamque reddemus [...] **nunc** quamvis sint homines qui mortuum Cn Carbonem oderint, tamen hi debent non quid illi accidere voluerint, sed quid ipsis in tali re metuendum sit cogitare. (Cicero, Ver. 2.37-39, 1st c. BC – from Risselada 1996: 120)

‘For indeed, if we want to throw all those things into disorder and mix them up, we will make our whole life perilous, invidious, and threatening [...]. **Now**, although there are men who hate Carbo, even though he’s dead, yet they ought to think not about what they wished would happen to him, but what they themselves would have to fear in such a situation.’

- (10) Nam si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus omne genus nosci posset, nil semine egeret, e mare primum homines, e terra posset oriri squamigerum genus [...] at **nunc** seminibus quia certis quaeque creantur, inde enascitur atque oras in luminis exit, materies ubi inest cuiusque et corpora prima; (Lucretius, 1.159-171, 1st c. BC – from Risselada 1996: 114)
 ‘For if they had been created out of nothing, all species could be born out of all things, none would need a seed. First of all, men could come out of the sea, and fish out of the earth; [...] **However**, as all creatures are formed from fixed seeds, each one is born and goes out onto the shores of light from its own material and its own primal bodies;’
- (11) Quid quaeris ? Permoleste tuli. Nulla enim abs te per hos dies epistula inanis aliqua re utili et suavi venerat. **Nunc**, si quid in ea epistula quam a.d. XVI Kal.Mai. dedisti fuit historia dignum, scribe quam primum, ne ignoremus; (Cicero, Att. 2.8.1, 1st c. BC – from Risselada 1996: 110)
 ‘Need I say more ? I was very annoyed. For no letter had come from you recently without something useful and pleasant in it. **Now**, if there was anything worthwhile in that letter you sent me on the 15th of April, write to me straight away so I won’t be left in ignorance;’

These uses are all intuitively close to the metadiscursive temporal use of NUNC (cf. (8) above), but the context-level uses are nonetheless distinct in as much as the marker is no longer accompanied by the metacomments which allowed its metadiscursive use in (8) to be interpreted as still fundamentally temporal in meaning. The scope of NUNC, in these latter three uses, is now firmly situated at the textual rather than the propositional level (cf. Traugott 1989).

The discourse-marking uses all seem to exploit a common inference from the use of NUNC in its basic deictic temporal sense, namely that there is a contrast between past or future events and what is true at the moment of speech. The context-level connective uses, however, are the result of subjectification (cf. Traugott 1989), in so far as NUNC in (9)-(11) does not mark objective contrasts in a real or imagined world, but rather the speaker’s assessment of the relationship between parts of the text. This is supported by the fact that, in all three examples above, NUNC is followed by adverbial clauses that function as part of an argumentational structure, viz. a concessive (9), a causal (10), and a conditional (11) clause.

An additional type of inference may plausibly have contributed to the pragmaticalization of NUNC: when a state-of-affairs marked by temporal deictic NUNC contrasts with a past state-of-affairs, the former may often be interpreted as being the result of the latter, as in (12):

- (12) urbes pacatae, agri sociorum, regum status xviris donabantur; **nunc** praesens pecunia, certa, numerata quaeritur. (Cicero, Agr. 1.1, 1st c. BC – from Perseus)
 ‘subdued cities, lands of allies, the status of kings, were given to the decemvirs; **now** actual cash payment is being asked for.’

This type of inference is particularly relevant to the third type of context-level use, illustrated in (11) above, where we find NUNC marking a transition from a subjective assessment to a directive speech act resulting from that assessment.

Although Risselada’s (1996) data do not clearly demonstrate any diachronic evolution, she notes that the non-temporal uses of NUNC are found in a narrower range of genres, and mainly in texts belonging to more informal and/or spoken registers, which suggests that they are likely to have been diachronically posterior to the temporal uses.¹ This assumption is further supported by etymological considerations, in as much as NUNC originates in the particle NUM, whose original, pre-Classical meaning was temporal (‘now’,

¹ An anonymous reviewer suggests that this could also be interpreted as a case of stable register variation. While that possibility of course cannot be excluded, it is made less likely by the fact that, as will be seen in sections 3.2 and 3.3 below, French *or* and *maintenant* have developed non-temporal uses that are very similar to those of NUNC, and which are not confined to spoken and/or informal registers (in fact, rather the opposite in the case of *or*).

cf. Ernout & Meillet 1967). In Classical Latin, this temporal sense of NUM is retained only in the lexically fused adverb ETIAMNUM ('up until now'), seen in (13):²

- (13) neque quicquam cum ea fecit **etiamnum** stupri (Plaut., Poen., prol. 100, 3rd-2nd c. BC – from Perseus)
'nor has he done anything dishonorable with her **up until now**'

3.2 The functions of (Old) French *or*

NUNC does not survive into Old French³, where its functions are initially replaced by the adverb *or* (sometimes spelled *ore* or *ores* in Medieval French). Because of the lack of an adequate textual record of Vulgar Latin/proto-French, the relationship between the disappearance of NUNC and the rise of *or* unfortunately cannot be easily charted, but as will be seen in the exposition below, there is very significant functional parallelism between the two markers, a parallelism which, due to their etymological unrelatedness, evidently cannot be explained by assuming that *or* is a straightforward continuation of NUNC.

On the basis of the existing literature on *or*, a total of ten different uses can be distinguished (cf. Antoine 1962, Ollier 1988, 1989, 1990, 2000a/b, Buridant 2000, Bertin 2001, Nølke 2005, Detges 2007, Librova 2008, Loobuyck n.d.). As with NUNC, we find that *or* has a number of temporal uses clearly belonging at the content level, as well as a group of non-temporal uses, which equally clearly belong at the context level. In between the two, however, is an intermediate use in which *or* functions like something very much like the modal particles that are so characteristic of the Continental Germanic languages (cf. Degand et al. 2013: 6ff), while nonetheless retaining its temporal meaning to a greater or lesser extent.

3.2.1 Temporal uses of *or*

The temporal uses of *or* are identical to those found with Latin NUNC. Thus, Medieval French has the following four, exemplified below:

- (i) A deictic temporal use, in which the state-of-affairs marked by *or* often contrasts with one or more states-of-affairs in the past or in the future, as in (14) below.
- (ii) A "transposed-present" use, in which *or* refers to the present stage of a (typically past-time) narrative, cf. (15).
In these first two uses, *or* can occur in different positions in the sentence. Typically, however, it occurs in initial position, possibly following a coordinating conjunction, as in (15).
- (iii) A correlative use *or...*, *or...*, glossable as 'now..., now...', 'one time..., the next...', 'at one time..., at another time...', or 'sometimes..., sometimes...', as in (16). This correlative pair is sometimes realized as *or...*, *maintenant...* (cf. section 3.3 below for discussion of *maintenant*).
- (iv) A metadiscursive temporal use, in which temporal *or* contributes to the structuring of monological discourse, as shown in (17). In this use, *or* – like NUNC – co-occurs with explicit metadiscursive comments (in italics in the examples), and it is usually found in initial position within its host utterance.

² In its non-fused form, NUM developed into an interrogative particle in Classical Latin, capable of marking both direct and indirect interrogatives. It is unclear what triggered this evolution, and whether there were any intermediate stages between the original temporal use of NUM and its use as an interrogative particle. The use of words for 'now' as (quasi) modal particles in a variety of other languages, incl. French (as will be seen below), e.g. Danish *nu*, German *nun*, suggests that there may have been a diachronic stage where NUM did more than simply mark its host clause as interrogative. The evolution from NUM to NUNC may thus conceivably involve an element of semasiological cyclicity.

³ The following periodization is used: Old French 9th-early 13th c.; Middle French mid-to-late 13th c.-16th c., Classical French 17th-18th c., Modern French 19th-20th c., Contemporary French 21st c.

- (14) **Or** est en Norwiz l'evesquié Dunt en Tiedfort fu ja la sié. (G. de Coinci, *Miracles*, t.3, c. 1218-1227 – from Loobuyck n.d. : 80)
 'The bishopry which used to be in Tiedfort, is **now** in Norwich.'
- (15) Ses garchons estoit moult en grans / D'enquerre quel chose il avoit, / Quant au venir sy hault cantoit / Et **ore** estoit triste et muz (Dit prunier B, c. 1330-1350, 69 – from DMF)
 'his valet was very keen to find out what was wrong with him, seeing as he'd been singing so loudly when he came, and **now** he was sad and silent'
- (16) ...cuer d'amant qui aime fort, / **Or** a joie, **or** a descomfort, / **Or** rit, **or** pleure,... (Machaut, R. Fort, c. 1341, 32 – from DMF)
 'the heart of a lover who loves very much is **sometimes** happy, **sometimes** sad, **sometimes** he laughs, **sometimes** he cries...'
- (17) Si leur print volonté d'aller jouer au bois, eulx / deux tant seullement, et si se misrent au chemin. / **Or ne vos fault il pas celer ce qui sert à l'ystoire.** / A la fois que noz bonnes gens eurent ceste devocion / ung laboureur avoit perdu son veau qu'il avoit mis / paistre dedans un pré. (CNN, c. 1456-67, 442 – from Frantext)
 'So they decided they wanted to go play in the woods, the two of them alone, and so they went. **At this point, I mustn't hide from you what helps the story along.** At the same time as our two good people conceived this desire, a laborer had lost his calf, which he'd put out to graze in a field.'

As with *NUNC*, we may assume that the deictic use of *or*, seen in (14), is the most basic one, with the transposed-present use in (15) and the metadiscursive use in (17) being contextually determined variants, whereas the non-deictic correlative use is likely to be a separately coded metonymical extension from the use of the basic deictic sense in contexts describing events happening in quick succession (cf. section 3.1.1 above). Temporal *or* is dominant in the earliest texts, but it disappears in Classical French and is no longer found in Modern French, except very occasionally in the metadiscursive function, as in (18) below. Vestiges of the temporal sense of *or* are, however, found in various lexicalized expressions, such as *d'ores et déjà* ('henceforth').⁴

- (18) **Or, pour en revenir** à Mme des Laumes... (Proust, *Guermites* 2, 1921, 451 – from TFLi)
 '**Now, to return** to Mme de Laumes...'

3.2.2 Quasi-modal particle use of *or*

Already in Old French, *or* is regularly used as a quasi-modal particle (henceforth, MP), i.e. as a type of pragmatic marker that scopes the host utterance in its entirety and modifies its illocution in some way (Hansen 1998: 42). The quasi-MP function of *or* appears to be that of boosting the illocution expressed by the host utterance, while simultaneously marking a shift in common ground, in the form of new assumptions being brought to bear on a current situation. *Or* can boost a range of speech act types, saliently orders, as in (19) below, and optatives, as in (20), but also interrogatives and declaratives (cf. the first and second instance in (21)). When *or* is used as a quasi-MP in declaratives, it typically accompanies a 1st p.sg. verb of hearing, as it does in the second instance in (21), or conversely, a 2nd p. sg. verb of speaking (Ollier 2000a: 446)

- (19) L'empereur commence a dire : **Or** m'entendez, fait il, biaux sire, ... (G. de Coinci, *Miracles*, t. 2, c. 1218-1227 – from Loobuyck n.d.: 160)
 'The emperor starts to speak : **Now** hear me, he says, brave lord,...'

⁴ It is perhaps worth noting that the orthography *ore(s)* seen in this latter expression tends to be confined to temporal uses of the marker in Medieval French (cf. Loobuyck n.d.: 103).

- (20) **Or** vos conseut Diex ! (Queste, c. 1220, 57, 13 – from Antoine 1962: 1204)
 ‘May God help you **now**!’
- (21) Que avez dit, sire Renart ? / Mescreez me vos **or** de rien ? / – Oïl – De coi ? – Ce sai je bien : / De traïson, de felonie. / – Renart, **or** oi ge vilenie, (Renart, br. 1, c. 1174, 581-84 – from Librova 2008 : 10)⁵
 ‘What did you say, my lord Renart? Do you **now** suspect me of something? – Yes. – Of what? This I know well: of treason, of faithlessness. – Renart, what I am hearing **really** is baseness.’

I consider this use, which does not appear to be conventionalized in Latin (although Antoine 1962: 1196 does note that NUNC is sometimes found with imperatives, yielding a communicative effect much like that of *or* in (19)), to be intermediate between clearly temporal and clearly non-temporal uses. Thus, the temporal value is never completely absent, but it is attenuated in this use. Note that in (21), for instance, *or* occurs twice in a brief conversational exchange, in which it marks (proposed) adjustments in the shared assumptions of speaker and hearer, rather than a sequence of real-world events.

The boosting function of quasi-MP *or* can be explained as the result of a metonymical inference from the deictic temporal use, to the effect that speech acts that are explicitly marked as relevant to the moment of speech must be particularly urgent and/or important. While the temporal sense is, as noted above, not completely absent from quasi-MP *or*, we may say that a metonymic figure/ground shift has taken place, such that the moment-of-speech meaning that is foregrounded in the deictic temporal use of the particle is backgrounded in the quasi-MP, whereas the originally inferred sense of importance or urgency has instead become foregrounded in the latter.

Or's boosting function may also to some extent be motivated by the not uncommon inference that a state-of-affairs marked by a proximal temporal deictic such as *or*, is a consequence of what precedes (cf. the discussion of the similar inference from NUNC in section 3.1.2 above, and in particular example (12)).

Finally, the common ground-shifting function of *or* can plausibly be accounted for as the result of subjectification, growing out of the use of temporal deictic *or* to contrast a present state-of-affairs with a past one. The quasi-MP use of *or* is confined to dialogic contexts, which gives some support to Waltereit & Detges' (2007) hypothesis that, in contrast to discourse markers, modal particles arise diachronically from negotiations of common ground that take place in dialogue.

Like the temporal uses of *or*, quasi-MP uses of the particle disappear after the Medieval period. They can very occasionally be found in Modern French, at least up until the 19th c., particularly in more or less frozen combinations with the demonstrative *ça* or the adverb *sus* ('on top' cf. (22)), but such instances have an archaic ring to them.

- (22) **Or** sus, commençons notre ouvrage. (Ac. 1798-1932 – from TLFi)
 ‘Come on **now**, let's begin our work.’

3.2.3 Non-temporal, discourse-marking uses of *or*

Although instances in which *or* is used with a non-temporal sense can be found already in Old French, discourse marking uses of the particle do not properly emerge until Middle French, and these latter uses become fully conventionalized only in Classical French (cf. Antoine 1962: 1198). During the Middle French period, *or* becomes fixed in utterance-initial position in all of its uses, the non-temporal ones gradually becoming predominant at the expense of the temporal uses discussed in section 3.2.1 above (Loobuyck n.d.). This may suggest the existence of a push-chain (Martinet 1952), with the newer adverb *maintenant* encroaching on *or* and pushing it out of its original temporal territory (see further section 3.3.1 below).

⁵ A referee suggests that the position of *or* may be relevant to its interpretation, pointing to its two different positions in this excerpt. There is little doubt that position is relevant, given that – as noted in section 3.2.3 below – increasing pragmatization results in *or* becoming fixed in initial position. However, inasmuch as most of the oldest texts available (including the one cited in (21)) are verse texts, where metre and rhyme often clearly play a role in the choice of specific word order, we must exercise caution in assessing the role of any variation of positions found in such texts.

In its non-temporal discourse-marking uses, *or* – like Latin *NUNC* (see section 3.1.2 above) – marks various types of shifts in discourse. As will be seen, however, the specific types of shifts are reminiscent of, but not identical to, those marked by *NUNC*. Non-temporal uses of *or* are the only ones that are still current in Modern and Contemporary French, where they are nowadays largely confined to formal registers.

There is a total of five such uses, which are illustrated below. The order in which they are listed here reflects what appears to me to be their most plausible direction of evolution:

- (i) A shift to a new (often unexpected) stage of a narrative, as shown in (23) below.
 - (ii) A shift to a discourse unit whose contents run counter to expectations created by the preceding discourse, as in (24).
 - (iii) A shift to a discourse unit that allows a conclusion to be drawn, as in (25).
 - (iv) A shift from the major to the minor premiss in a syllogism, as in (26).
 - (v) A shift to a particular case of a more general phenomenon described in the preceding discourse, as in (27).
- (23) Gervaise propre nous met en exemple d'un chevalier nommé Rogier du Chastel de Rousset, en la province d'Auxci, qui trouva une faee et la vould avoir a femme. Elle s'i consenty par tel convenant que jamais nue la verroit. Et furent grant temps ensemble, et croissoit le chevalier en grant prosperité. **Or** advint, grant temps après, que la dicte faee se baignoit. (Jean d'Arras, *Mélusine*, 1392, 4 – from Frantext)
- 'Gervaise himself gives the example of a knight called Rogier du Chastel de Rousset, in the province of Auxci, who found a fairy and wanted her for his wife. She consented on condition that he should never see her naked. And they were together for a long time, and the knight prospered greatly. **Now**, it happened, a long time after, that the aforementioned fairy was bathing.'
- (24) Ce chevalier, qui ceens est, est l'homme au monde que je plus ayme [...]. **Or** ne me peut il bonnement dire ce qu'il a sur le cueur. (CNN, c. 1456-67, 248 – from DMF)
- 'This knight who's in this place, is the man I love most in the world [...]. **Yet** he cannot tell me what is really on his mind.'
- (25) « Je ne suis pas raciste mais les Noirs c'est trop segmentant, **or** nous devons mettre l'emphase sur la francité du produit. Ce n'est pas ma faute si notre produit est blanc, et que donc, pour le vendre, il faut montrer des Blancs... » (Beigbeder, 99 francs, 2000, 90 – from Frantext)
- '“I'm not racist but with black people, it's too segmenting, **yet** we have to emphasize the Frenchness of the product. It's not my fault if the product is white and that, therefore, we have to show white people...”'
- (26) Tous les hommes sont mortels. **Or**, Socrate est un homme. Donc, Socrate est mortel.
- 'All men are mortal. (Ø) Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.'
- (27) Nous sommes attirés par ce qui nous flatte, de quelque façon que ce soit. **Or** François admirait le comte. (Radiguet, *Bal*. 1923, 89 – from TLFi)
- 'We're attracted to what flatters us, in whichever way. **Now**, François admired the count.'

The first two of these non-temporal uses, viz. the marking of shifts to a new (often unexpected) stage of a narrative or to a new discourse unit whose contents run counter to expectations, can be accounted for as arising *via* the common inference triggered by the deictic temporal use of *or*, that there is some sort of contrast between the present, *or*-marked, event and some past or future event.

The third non-temporal use, i.e. the marking of a shift to a discourse unit that allows a conclusion to be drawn, relates to the first two *via* the fact that a discourse unit containing something unexpected will frequently constitute an intermediate stage in a narrative or argument, before the resolution.

The example in (28) shows the kind of bridging context (Heine 2002) that may have resulted in the emergence of *or* as a discourse marker, i.e. a context that is ambiguous between the basic deictic-temporal use of *or* and an innovative, non-temporal interpretation of type (i)-(iii). In this excerpt, the *or*-marked segment describes a state-of-affairs that coincides with the moment of speech, but it also introduces a new and unexpected development, which contrasts – both temporally and non-temporally – with the contents of the preceding discourse segment, and which potentially allows some sort of conclusion to be drawn:

- (28) « Je parti de vos avant ier / Par vostre gré et par amor, / Sanz mal talant et sanz iror ; / **Or** ont tant fait li losengier / Que de moi se veulent vengier / Et vos m'avez jugié a mort. » (Renart, br. 1, c. 1174, 1245 – from Librova 2008 : 7)
 ‘ “I left you the day before yesterday, with your blessing, and without bad blood or anger; **now (however)**, the traitors have done so much that they wish to avenge themselves on me, and you have condemned me to death,” ’

The fourth use of *or*, in syllogisms, can be seen as a genre-specific conventionalization of the preceding use, inasmuch as the minor premiss of a syllogism is what allows the conclusion to be drawn.

The final discourse-marking use, i.e. marking shifts to a particular instantiation of something more general, can be derived by inference from the use of *or* in syllogisms, where the minor premiss by definition denotes a particular case.

Not only does the textual record suggest that *or* underwent a gradual process of pragmaticalization, but the fact that these non-temporal uses of *or* are reminiscent of, but not identical to, the non-temporal uses of NUNC, is a strong argument in favor of assuming that both markers are polysemous, and that their discourse-marking uses are not simply contextual modulations of a single abstract underlying meaning which allows for the triggering of temporal interpretations in some contexts and non-temporal interpretations in others. The most salient difference between the non-temporal uses of NUNC and those of *or* is that NUNC marks shifts to final discourse units, whereas *or* marks shifts to non-final units. This would be difficult to explain on a monosemy account, given that the temporal uses of the two markers are exactly the same.

3.3 The functions of French *maintenant*

We come, finally, to the uses of the most recent of the three adverbs discussed in this paper, namely *maintenant*. Unlike *or*, *maintenant* retains both temporal and non-temporal uses in Contemporary French, a total of nine uses having been identified in the literature (e.g. Nef 1980, Nyan 1998, Bertin 2001, Celle 2004, De Mulder & Vettters 2008, Mellet 2008, Loobuyck n.d.). As was the case with *or*, however, the non-temporal uses have arisen gradually over time, and although, to my knowledge, no-one has previously identified the diachronic relationship between the two markers as cyclic in the sense defined in section 2.2 of this paper, it has not escaped the attention of at least some scholars that they are very much alike in their range of both temporal and non-temporal uses (cf. Ollier 2000, Bertin 2001, Loobuyck n.d.).

3.3.1 Temporal uses of *maintenant*

Old French *maintenant* had a total of five different temporal uses, exemplified below, four of which have survived into to Contemporary French:

- (i) An “anaphoric” temporal use in which *maintenant* serves to locate a state-of-affairs either immediately before or immediately after a given time of reference (which may be identical to the moment of speech, as in (29)-(30) below).
- (ii) A deictic temporal use, in which *maintenant* marks the state-of-affairs in its scope as temporally coinciding with or including the moment of speech, as in (31). In this use it oftens contrasts with a past or future state-of-affairs (cf. the negative temporal adverb *onques* in (31)).
- (iii) A “transposed-present” use, in which *maintenant* refers to the present stage of a narrative, as in (32).
- (iv) A correlative use, *maintenant... maintenant...* (occasionally the correlative structure may take the form *maintenant..., une autre fois...* ‘another time’), glossable as ‘now..., now...’, ‘one time..., the next...’, ‘at one time..., at another time...’, or ‘sometimes..., sometimes...’, seen in (33).
- (v) A metadiscursive temporal use, in which *maintenant* fulfils a discourse-structuring function in monologue. In this use, illustrated in (34), the marker co-occurs with explicit metadiscursive comments (italicized). Notice that *maintenant* in this example also co-occurs with a non-temporal

use of *or*, supporting the analysis of the temporal vs non-temporal senses of not just *or* but both markers as distinct (cf. section 3.2.3 *in fine*).

- (29) Se c'est il, bien poez savoir que je vos an dirai le voir **maintenant** que je le verrai. (ErecKu, c. 1170, 5b, 1129 - from BFM)
'If it's him, be assured that I'll tell you the truth **immediately** when I see him.'
- (30) ...mal l'en prendera, ensi que il fist a ce roi Edouwart, dont je parloie **maintenant** (Froissart, c. 1400, 43 - from Bertin 2001 : 52)
'...he'll come to harm, just as King Edward did, of whom I spoke **a moment ago**'
- (31) Onques ne fust en mon vivant / Sy joyeux que suis **maintenant**. (Myst. St Bernard, 1450, 113 - from Bertin 2001: 50)
'I was never in my life so happy as I am **now**.'
- (32) Et Gale qui moult s'esjoit / De la glorieuse promesse / Manda **maintenant** l'abbaësse (Tomb. Chartr., Trois contes S., c. 1337-1339, 98 - from DMF)
'And Gale, who was very pleased with the praiseworthy promise, **now** sent for the abbess'
- (33) Telz sont cheulx qui veullent **maintenant** une chose, **maintenant** une autre (Daudin, De la erudition H., c. 1360-1380, 330 - from DMF)
'Thus are those who **sometimes** want one thing, **sometimes** another'
- (34) Or *retourmons* **maintenant** a nostre mary, qui a trouvé deux bons compagnons (CNN, c. 1456-1467, 528 - from Frantext)
'However, *let's now return* to the husband, who has found two good companions.'

The reader will have noticed that the uses listed in (ii)-(v) are identical to the temporal uses of both NUNC and *or*. I will therefore assume that they can be accounted for by the same principles that were brought to bear in the case of the latter two particles (cf. sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.1 above).

Where *maintenant* differs from NUNC and *or* is in the existence of the “anaphoric” use listed under (i) and exemplified in (29)-(30). I call this use “anaphoric” (for lack of a better term) because *maintenant* situates the designated moment with respect to a time of reference indicated elsewhere in the immediate co-text. The “anaphoric” use is diachronically prior to the other four, and is by far the most frequent use of *maintenant* in Old French, the other four remaining relatively rare until the Middle French period (Loobuyck n.d.). It is not difficult to imagine how the adverb may have developed from this original non-deictic sense into a proximal-deictic temporal adverb glossable as ‘now’. If we designate the deictic temporal center as T0, “anaphoric” *maintenant* can be analyzed as denoting T0±i. Given that the T0 denoted by the proximal deictic frequently, indeed usually, goes beyond the exact moment of speech, the “anaphoric” and the proximal deictic senses of *maintenant* are often difficult to distinguish in individual instances of use of the adverb. An example like (35) below thus constitutes a possible bridging context between the “anaphoric” source meaning and the innovative deictic meaning of *maintenant*. This kind of ambiguity is particularly, but – as (35) shows – by no means exclusively, favored when *maintenant* is used with static verb forms such as the imperfect past or the present perfect (whose diachronic source meaning is a present state resulting from a past event).

- (35) Se tu es filz de Dieu tout puissant, / Maintenant de la croix descent ! (La passion d'Autun, 1470, 110 - from Bertin 2001: 60)
'If you're the son of almighty God, come down from the cross now/immediately!'

Once the deictic temporal sense becomes entrenched in Middle French, however, the “anaphoric” sense of *maintenant* begins to disappear (Loobuyck n.d.). It is at this point in time that *or* becomes increasingly confined to non-temporal contexts, giving the impression that the semantic evolution of *maintenant* from “anaphoric” to deictic may have triggered a push-chain, whose effects arguably persist into Modern French (see sections 3.2.3 above *in principio* and 3.3.3 below).

3.3.2 Quasi-modal particle use of *maintenant*

Similarly to *or*, *maintenant* develops a use as a quasi-MP, typically with non-declarative speech acts, in which it suggests that the host speech act is prompted by something in the immediate linguistic or extralinguistic context, while simultaneously marking a shift in common ground. Examples can be found starting in the late Middle French period, once *maintenant* has become entrenched as a temporal deictic, but this use remains rare in the Middle Ages (Loobuyck n.d.).

As was the case with *or*, temporality is never completely absent from uses of *maintenant* as a quasi-MP, although it is often quite attenuated. It is worth noting that, in Modern/Contemporary French at least, *maintenant* can receive stress when used as a temporal adjunct, but not when it functions as a quasi-MP, supporting the idea that the latter is a distinct use. Exx. (36)-(39) below, which illustrate quasi-MP uses of *maintenant* in imperatives, interrogatives, exclamatives, and optatives, respectively, are ordered from more to less temporal; thus, while (36) does convey a sense that the addressee has not taken pity up until the moment of utterance, but that such pity ought to be the result of what has just been said, there is, in (39), no sense that the feeling of hope encouraged by the speaker stands in any meaningful opposition to a past state of non-hope. As those examples show, *maintenant* is unlike *or*, however, in that it does not appear to prefer the utterance-initial position:

- (36) Ayez doncques, mere, ayez **maintenant** compassion de mon enfermeté. (A. Chartier, *Le livre de l'espérance*, c. 1429-1430, 55 – from Loobuyck n.d.: 113)
 ‘Do therefore, mother, do **now** take pity on my misery.’
- (37) Vous me croyez **maintenant** ? Vous savez que je ne mens pas ? (Mauriac, *Asmodée*, 1938, 111 – from Loobuyck n.d.: 35)
 ‘Do you believe me **now**? Do you know that I’m not lying?’
- (38) Il insulte son oncle, **maintenant** ! Sors d’ici. Que je ne te revoie plus ! (Mauriac, *Myst. Frontenac*, 1933, 118 – from Bertin 2001: 46)
 ‘**Now** he’s insulting his uncle! Get out. And don’t let me see you again!’
- (39) [Des ouvriers] m’ont appris que la commande datait de douze jours seulement. Espérons **maintenant** que ce travail sera terminé avant six mois. (Bloy, *Journal*, 1892, 25 – from TLFi)
 ‘Some workers told me that the order had only been made twelve days ago. **So** let’s hope that this work will be completed within six months.’

The suggestion that the host speech act is prompted either by previous discourse or by immediately preceding events, is an obvious inference from the temporal deictic use of *maintenant*. Both this and the common-ground shifting function of *maintenant* can be seen as the result of subjectification of the deictic temporal meaning of the marker. Like quasi-MP *or*, *maintenant* in this function is found principally in dialogue, although (39), which is taken from a published diary, shows that this is not an absolute requirement.

The use of *maintenant* in (35) above, repeated here as (40) for convenience, not only illustrates a potential bridging context between the anaphoric and the deictic temporal senses of the adverb, but also between a temporal and a quasi-MP use, as suggested by the third possible gloss in (40):

- (40) Se tu es filz de Dieu tout puissant, / Maintenant de la croix descent ! (La passion d’Autun, 1470, 110 – from Bertin 2001: 60)
 ‘If you’re the son of almighty God, come down from the cross now/immediately!/...then do come down from the cross!’

3.3.3 Non-temporal discourse-marking uses of *maintenant*

We come, finally, to the non-temporal discourse-marking uses, of which *maintenant* has three, exemplified below. These three uses are in some ways reminiscent of, but not identical to, the non-temporal uses of both *NUNC* and *or*. Like the other two markers, non-temporal *maintenant* is used in monological contexts, to mark various kinds of discursive shifts, as follows:

- (i) Marking shifts from a conditional state-of-affairs to a factual one, or *vice versa*, as seen in (41)-(42).
 - (ii) Marking shifts from stating or implicating a certain content, to distancing oneself from it, as in (43)-(44).
 - (iii) Marking shifts from an (implied) speech act of a particular type to a speech act of a different kind, as in (45)-(46).
- (41) S'il venait, je serais heureux. **Maintenant**, hélas, il ne viendra pas. (from Nef 1980 : 158)
'If he came, I'd be happy. **Mind you**, unfortunately, he won't come.'
- (42) Je suis encore le monsieur qui doit donner l'autorisation pour que son fils se fasse assassiner. Eh bien ! Non, je ne la donne pas. **Maintenant**, si tu veux te mettre de la Résistance en cachette de nous... (Montherlant, *Demain*, t. 2, 714, 1949 – from TLFi)
'I'm still the gentleman who must give permission for his son to be killed. Well, no. I won't give it. **Mind you**, if you want to become a member of the Resistance without telling us...'
- (43) On ne peut pas le laisser là, non ? **Maintenant** si tu ne veux pas m'aider, ça va, prête-moi seulement la bagnole et je tâcherai de m'en tirer sans toi. (Beauvoir, *Les Mandarins*, 563, 1954 – from Frantext)
'We can't leave him here, can we? **That said**, if you don't want to help me, that's okay, just lend me the car and I'll try to manage without you.'
- (44) Pierre dit que Paul a volé dans la caisse. **Maintenant**, moi je ne fais que te le répéter. (adapted from Nef 1980 : 159-161)
'Pierre says that Paul has stolen from the till. **Mind you**, I'm just repeating what he said.'
- (45) Je ferai ce que je peux. **Maintenant**, je ne te promets pas d'être là à 5 heures. (from Nef 1980 : 161)
'I'll do what I can. **That said**, I don't promise to be there at 5 o'clock.'
- (46) Quant à ce soir, je ne compte pas la voir ; **maintenant** si elle le désirait ou si vous trouviez un joint, vous n'avez qu'à m'envoyer un mot chez Mme de Saint-Euverte jusqu'à minuit, et après chez moi. (Proust – from Mellet 2008: 80)
'As for this evening, I don't expect to see her; **that said**, if she wanted to, or if you were to find a way out, all you have to do is send me a message to Mme de Saint-Euverte's house until midnight, and to my house afterwards.'

Although a small number of occurrences of utterance-initial *maintenant* marking discursive shifts and/or contradictions can be found in Medieval French, these discourse-marking uses only fully develop from the Classical period onwards. As the above examples show, *maintenant* as a non-temporal discourse marker is constrained to appear in first position, unlike the temporal adverb and the quasi-MP, both of which are mobile.

Unlike *NUNC* and *or*, non-temporal *maintenant* always seems to have a retrospective hedging function (cf. Lakoff 1973), either weakening the force of the preceding speech act, as in (43), (45), or (46), or canceling a possible implicature from that speech act, as in (41), (42), or (44).

Whereas the connective *or* is largely confined to more formal, principally written, registers in contemporary French, discourse-marking *maintenant* is readily found in less formal, more interactional contexts, as suggested by several of the above examples. It is quite conceivable that, just as the development of the deictic sense of *maintenant* may have pushed *or* out of the temporal domain (cf. section. 3.3.1 *in fine*), the subsequent pragmatization of *maintenant* may have been instrumental in restricting the functional space of the older marker *or* even further.

Contexts like the one in (47) below can be seen as bridging contexts for the transition from temporal to non-temporal, discourse-marking uses of *maintenant*:

- (47) « Pourtant se Dieu nous a donné de bonnes et grandes fortunes et que nous soyons bien à nos aises et que nous ayons gagné de l'argent, si n'est-ce pas pourtant pour nous reposer ; ce n'est pas que nous devons lesser faire nostre mestier aux aultres. Nous l'avons aprins à grans paines et grans travaux et dangiers et à la sueur de nos corps. **Maintenant**, quant nous sommes clers en la science, devons-nous lesser l'œuvre ? » (Bueil, 1461, 150 – from Bertin 2001 : 56)
- ‘ “However, if God has given us good and great fortunes and if we are well off and have made money, it is however not so we can rest; it is not that we should let others do our trade. We have acquired it at great pains and through hard work and dangers and sweat. [**Now that/Now**, just because] we are well versed in the knowledge of it, should we leave the practice behind?” ‘

3.4 Similarities and differences between the three markers

Table 1 below summarizes and compares the uses of NUNC, *or*, and *maintenant*, showing the areas of semantic/pragmatic overlap, but also the differences, between the markers that have been uncovered in this paper, in synoptic form. Uses that are marked with a bullet point (•) are deemed to be subtypes of the closest non-bullet-pointed use above them in the table.

Table 1: Uses of nunc, *or*, and *maintenant*

	NUNC	<i>or</i>	<i>maintenant</i>
Anaphoric temporal use	-	-	+
Deictic temporal use	+	+	+
• Transposed temporal use	+	+	+
• Discourse-internal temporal use	+	+	+
• Correlative temporal use	+	+	+
Quasi-modal particle use	-	+	+
Non-temporal discourse marker indicating shifts	+	+	+
• Marking shifts from digression to main point	+	-	-
• Marking shifts to a move that implies a conclusion	+	+	-
• Marking shifts from a general statement to a particular case	-	+	-
• Marking shifts from a major to a minor premiss	-	+	-
• Marking shifts to a contrasting move	+	+	+
• Marking shifts to a new stage of a narrative	-	+	-
• Marking shifts to a different type of speech act	+	+	+
• Hedging function	-	-	+

We see that the three markers share all of their temporal uses, except the anaphoric one, which is peculiar to *maintenant*, and which is the source meaning of that adverb. French *or* and *maintenant* share a broadly similar use as quasi-modal particles, which is not found with Latin NUNC (or at least not with anything resembling the same degree of entrenchment). A slight difference between the two French markers in this use appears to lie in a perceived illocution-boosting effect of *or*, which has been noted in the literature (e.g. Antoine 1962, Ollier 2000a, Bertin 2001, Librova 2008), but which is not clearly in evidence in the case of *maintenant*.

At the level of the discourse-marking uses, we find that while the three markers share the basic property of marking shifts in monological discourse, the specific types of shifts that they can mark are to a large extent not the same. There are clearly some contexts, principally contrastive/adversative ones, in which both *or* and *maintenant* can felicitously occur, such as (48) below (where *maintenant* is the marker actually used

by Victor Hugo). However, even in contexts where both *or* and *maintenant* are felicitous, the two markers do not have the same effect, *or* conveying a more strongly adversative stance than *maintenant*, as shown by the suggested glosses:

- (48) Tel mot ressemble à une griffe, tel autre à un œil éteint et sanglant ; telle phrase semble remuer comme une pince de crabe. Tout cela vit de cette vitalité hideuse des choses qui se sont organisées dans la désorganisation. **Maintenant/Or**, depuis quand l’horreur exclut-elle l’étude ? Depuis quand la maladie chasse-t-elle le médecin ? (Hugo, *Misér.*, t. 2, 1862, 188 – from TLFi)
 ‘Such and such a word is like a claw, such and such other one like a dead, bleeding eye; such and such a sentence seems to move like a crab’s pincer. All this lives off the hideous vitality of things that have organized themselves in the midst of disorganization. **Mind you/However**, since when does a feeling of horror stand in the way of examination? Since when does the illness chase the doctor away?’

In addition, either of the two French markers may serve as a felicitous translation of Latin *NUNC*, depending on the context: thus, *or* seems more felicitous in a French translation of the Latin example (10) in section 3.1.2 above, whereas *maintenant* appears preferable in a translation of (11).

4 Conclusion

The analysis presented in section 3 has demonstrated that, from Latin to Modern French, the core proximal-deictic temporal adverb corresponding to English *now* has been twice renewed, each time by an etymologically wholly unrelated item. Subsequent to each renewal, the functional range of the items in question has been extended and renewed in a spiral-like fashion, i.e. in a way that is very reminiscent of, but does not precisely replicate, the functional range of the markers’ diachronic predecessor(s). Thus, while each of the three items considered on its own has developed in one clear direction, from content-level to context-level functions, the cyclic pattern emerges when we consider the three together, each of them starting, at different times, from a very similar point of departure and moving in a very similar direction of evolution to that of its predecessor.

Apart from the lack of an etymological relation, this type of repeated semantic/pragmatic evolution is essentially similar to what Hansen (2014) observes in the evolution from Latin *IAM* through Old French *ja* to Modern French *déjà*. This justifies the conclusion that the two developments instantiate subtypes of one and the same diachronic phenomenon, viz. semantic/pragmatic cyclicity. I proposed in section 2.2 of this paper, and in Hansen (2015, fc) that the two subtypes are, respectively, semasiological and onomasiological in nature, corresponding to the two fundamental perspectives that may be taken on the study of linguistic meaning.

I have shown that, as in the case of grammaticalization cycles, the word “cycle” should not be taken literally when applied to semantic/pragmatic change, but that both types of diachronic developments are in fact more accurately described as “spirals”, in so far as the end point of either type of development may not be completely identical to the starting point. However, because the term “cycle” is the commonly accepted term in the literature on (morpho)syntactic change, I prefer to use it to describe similar changes at the semantic/pragmatic level, with a view to bringing out the correspondences between these types of change.

The existence of semantic/pragmatic cycles is still too recent a discovery for us to have a clear sense of its frequency and importance across languages (although see Hansen 2015, fc for additional examples from Romance, and Zakowski fc for examples from Ancient Greek). However, the fact that such cycles are found across languages strongly supports the basic applicability of the Uniformitarian Principle (cf. Labov 1994: 21) to the study of meaning change.

This principle states that processes that can be observed to affect currently ongoing changes may be assumed to have been operative, and thus to have potential explanatory force, in the case of historical

changes as well. While the Uniformitarian Principle is taken for granted in the study of phonological change, that field being premised on physiological facts about the human speech organs, it cannot as straightforwardly be adopted by historical semanticists and pragmaticists, given that culture plays a central role at the latter level of linguistic description. Thus, it is well-established that not only do concepts and ways of perceiving the world differ from one historical period to another, but so do the precise inventory of illocution types and speech events available to language users, norms of politeness, genre conventions, and conversational routines.

Nevertheless, the existence of semantic/pragmatic cycles within and even across languages and cultures, and covering, in the case of both NUNC > *or* > *maintenant* and IAM > *ja* > *déjà*, approx. two millenia, shows that – cultural and contextual variation aside – similar source meanings can and do lend themselves to similar sorts of inferences across time. The degree of variation that we do find across the extended meanings of the items in each set may be attributable to cultural variation. To the extent that those extensions appear readily explainable to the present-day analytical eye, it is, however, likely that the variation is partly a natural consequence of the fundamentally instructional nature of linguistically coded meanings (e.g. Hansen 2008: 17-26). If all linguistic meaning consists, in the first instance, of processing instructions, then it follows that, as with any other type of instructions, different hearers will carry those instructions out in at least somewhat different ways, yielding – even in cases where communication may be said to have been successfully accomplished – more or less subtly different results. As Hansen (2008: 25) puts it,

“not only will the way a given instruction is carried out be constrained by what other – perhaps more specific, perhaps partially conflicting – instructions are or have been given in the same utterance or discourse, it will also be constrained by the larger context, including general principles of utterance interpretation [...], and finally, by the fact that no two people have exactly identical mental grammars (where grammar includes coded meanings), or identical knowledge and experience on which to draw in constructing concepts and identifying relevant frames...”.

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Data bases

BFM = Base de français médiéval < <http://txm.bfm-corpus.org/>>

DMF = Dictionnaire du Moyen Français < <http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/>>

Frantext = Base textuelle Frantext < <http://www.frantext.fr/>>

Perseus = Perseus Digital Library < <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>>

TLFi = Trésor de la langue française informatisé < <http://atilf.atilf.fr/>>

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