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Discourse Functions and Discourse Representation:
An Empirically and Linguistically Motivated,
Interdisciplinarily-Oriented Approach to Natural Language Texts

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Aspect and Text Structure

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Aspect and Text Structure – Part I

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Abstract:

The central idea behind this deliverable is that text type has an effect on the functioning of aspectual constructions in discourse. To show this, we compare the discourse function of aspectual information in two different text types in English, viz. narrative fictional texts and newspaper reports. We outline the general characteristics of each text type, and the way these affect the use of events and states at the discourse level. We also consider in more detail the past perfect in the two text types: we show how its use is subject to a number of general discourse principles, and illustrate how these principles interact with the structure of the two text types.

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1 Introduction

While considerable attention has been paid in the existing literature on tense and aspect to the truth-conditional interpretation of tense and aspect combinations, few attempts have been made to consider the function of such constructions in particular discourse contexts. The use of the past perfect is a case in point. It is generally assumed that the past perfect serves to express a relationship of temporal precedence between the state of affairs it combines with and a point of orientation in the past. But such an account does not explain why a discourse like the one in (1) sounds odd, despite the fact that it is pragmatically plausible that the second state of affairs preceded the first:

(1) ?Ewan poured himself a cup of coffee. He had entered the room.

Moreover, temporal precedence between two past states of affairs need not be expressed by means of a past perfect. In the following extract from a newspaper article, for instance, it is expressed by means of a simple past:

(2) Norman, of Washington, Tyne and Wear, was due to wed his girlfriend of seven years in June but had to postpone the day till September because of the Gulf crisis. His brother John, 29, said: "She is devastatated. They were very close." The flier joined [$\leftrightarrow$ had joined] the RAF in 1986. [*The Sun*, 15/1/91]

Caenepeel (1991) drew attention to the fact that temporal precedence in the past can be expressed both by means of a simple past or a past perfect. It was also noted, however, that the two are not interchangeable. Compare:

(3) a I got in early this morning. I took the bus.
b ? I got in early this morning. I had taken the bus.

(4) a ?Then everybody applauded. Keith announced his promotion.
b Then everybody applauded. Keith had announced his promotion.

Discourses such as (3)(a) appear to contradict the discourse rules of semantic frameworks such as Discourse Representation Theory, which stipulate that a new event will introduce a temporal update into the discourse: in (3)(a) the second event is interpreted as having occurred *before* rather than after the first one. Recent proposals have attempted to explain the temporal interpretation of such discourses in terms of world knowledge (such as knowledge about causality) overriding the principle that events will introduce at temporal update (cf. Dahlgren e.a. (1987), Lascarides and Asher (1991)). Example (4)(a) suggests, however, that the issue is more complex: the discourse sounds odd despite the fact that a causal relation between the two events is highly salient.

In Caenepeel (1991) it was argued that a full account of temporal ordering relationships needs to take the role of discourse type into account. It was claimed that there are fundamental processing differences between narrative and non-narrative discourse types,[1] and that reverse

[1]Reichman (1984) makes a similar claim.

order data will only occur felicitously in a non-narrative discourse segment.[2] In such an approach, the focus shifts from the role of syntax and semantics (even 'discourse-based' and 'world knowledge based' semantics) to that of the characteristics of the larger discourse context.

In Caenepeel (1991) the observation that discourse context will affect the temporal interpretation of a sequence of sentences was based chiefly on contrastive temporal interpretations of simple past event sequences. This deliverable aims to explore the same idea further through the detailed study of another syntactic construction—the past perfect—in two different discourse contexts. To do so, we have investigated how the use of events and states in general, and the past perfect in particular, varies along contextual dimensions in two types of discourse. We have used two corpora of written monological discourse, a narrative and a non-narrative one. The former consists of a number of 20th century novels and short stories. The second is made up of news reports published in British newspapers published between 15–17 January 1991, i.e. at the onset of the Gulf War, on the topic of the Gulf War; these form part of the larger DANDELION corpus of Gulf War articles. We refer to the newspaper articles as 'reports' to distinguish them from editorials, commentary and narrative (eye witness) accounts, which constitute distinct discourse types.

The structure of this part of the deliverable is as follows. In Section 2, we set out the contextual parameters of the two text types in a systemic framework. On the basis of this we discuss, in Section 3, how events and states typically function in the two text types. In Section 4, we focus on the use and function of the past perfect, relating it to the structure of both text types. In the second part of this deliverable the conclusions presented here for English will be compared with some Dutch data, and placed in the framework of the *Two Track Theory of Time* (TTT) outlined in Oversteegen (1989).

2 Description of the Corpora

As already pointed out in the previous section, the aim of this deliverable is to specify more precisely the relationship between aspectual choice (and, in particular, the choice of the past perfect) and discourse context, by studying the function of aspectual constructions (such as the past perfect) in a context-sensitive way. In this section we present a description of how the contexts constituted in and by the text types in the corpus differ from each other. For this description we rely on the text type taxonomy presented in DANDELION deliverable R1.1.1a (Lavid (1993)), which provides a socio-linguistic framework in which different types of text can be analysed.

The taxonomy outlined in Lavid (1993) uses concepts from systemic grammar, in which the notion of function is closely associated with the notion of a communicative situation—the concrete situation in which a text is produced. This communicative situation is viewed as a configuration of meanings selected from the three functional components of language, viz. the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function.[3] These three

[2]This suggests that the DRT approach may still make correct predictions with respect two reverse order event sequences, as long as it restricts itself to narrative discourse.

[3]See Halliday (1985) for a definition of these.

categories of the situation are linked to three categories of the semantic system, referred to as the field, the tenor and the mode respectively. Thus each actual selection of meaning reflects a configurational parameter of the communicative situation. In what follows we compare the two text types we have studied with respect to their field, their tenor and their mode.

2.1 Field of Discourse

The field of discourse includes two interrelated aspects: the purposive role or social function of the text (e.g. the text's communicative goals), and the experiential domain which configures the text's ideational content. The latter includes the nature of the text's participants, the circumstances of time, place and manner, and the time reference system of the text. In this section we describe the field of both text types in the corpus in terms of their main foci.

2.1.1 The Narrative Fiction Corpus

Narrative Focus Many goals can be ascribed to narrative fictional texts. They include entertaining the reader, providing insight in the human psyche or society, creating a work of art etc. The feature which most clearly distinguishes narratives from other types of expository texts, however, is that they aim to *narrate* or *tell a story*; indeed, if it lacks this dimension a text will cease to be a narrative. The notion of narrating is typically associated with the the setting out of events in a particular temporal order. This ties in with an influential tradition in the literature on narrative which views linear temporal ordering (or so-called 'narrative movement', where the ordering of the sentences on the page is understood to reflect the order in which the described events occurred) as constitutive of narrative (Cf. Labov (1972), Fleischman (1986), Givon (1987)).

In this deliverable we adopt the view that a narrative context will be characterized by the fact that the temporal ordering of events with respect to each other is crucial for an adequate understanding of the text. We will also show, however, that this phenomenon is in fact the consequence of three more fundamental characteristics of narrative texts. In section 2.2.1 below we will identify those as the *bracketing of the speech point*, the construction of *(an) episodic structure(s)*, and the projection of episodic structures onto a *narrative time line*. We will also claim that it is only in the light of these notions that the specific functioning of tense and aspect combinations in narrative can be understood.

For the time being, however, we will say that the setting out of events in a particular temporal order contributes to the realization of the narrative focus of narrative fictional texts. The following extract constitutes an example of this:

(5) Gabriel began to carve second helpings as soon as he had finished the round without serving himself. Everyone protested loudly so that he compromised by taking a long draught of stout for he had found the carving hot work. Mary Jane settled down quietly to her supper but Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia were still toddling round the table, walking on each other's heels, getting in each other's way and giving each other unheeded orders. Mr Browne begged of them to sit down and eat their suppers but they said there was time enough so that, at last, Freddy Malins stood up and, capturing Aunt Kate, plumbed her down on her chair amid general laughter. (Joyce, *The Dead*)

Note that changing the order of the sentences in this passage also changes the meaning of the discourse:

(6) Mr Browne begged of them to sit down and eat their suppers but they said there was time enough so that, at last Freddy Malins stood up and, capturing Aunt Kate, plumbed her down on her chair amid general laughter. Everyone protested loudly so that he compromised by taking a long draught of stout for he had found the carving hot work. Mary Jane settled down quietly to her supper but Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia were still toddling round the table, walking on each other's heels, getting in each other's way and giving each other unheeded orders. Gabriel began to carve second helpings as soon as he had finished the round without serving himself.

Descriptive Focus In addition to their narrative focus, the texts we have looked at are *fictional* in character. This means they are set in an imaginary world inhabitated by imaginary people, which does not exhibit a clear and immediate relationship to situations and people in the actual world. Another important focus of narrative fiction will therefore lie in providing information which enables the reader to construct an appropriate interpretative referential framework for the events in the narrative. We will call this the *descriptive* focus. The following constitutes an example of a passage which contributes to the realization of the descriptive focus:

(7) His aunts were two small plainly dressed old women. Aunt Julia was an inch or so the taller. Her hair, drawn low over the tops of her ears, was grey; and grey also, with darker shadows, was her large flaccid face. Though she was stout in build and stood erect her slow eyes and parted lips gave her the appearance of a woman who did not know where she was or where she was going. Aunt Kate was more vivacious. Her face, helathier than her sister's, was all puckers and creases, like a shrivelled red apple, and her hair, braided in the same old-fashioned way, had not lost its ripe nut colour. (Joyce, *The Dead*)

Perspectival Focus While statements in narrative fiction are immune to judgements of truth or falsity because they lack actual reference, states of affairs may nevertheless be described in a way that is either *perspectivally neutral* or *perspectivally coloured.* In the former case, the states of affairs are presented as facts within the fiction, in the sense that their truth status within the alternative world of the fiction is presented as independent of the (potentially distorting) presence of a subject. The discourses in (5) and (7) above constitute examples of this. In the latter case, states of affairs are presented as reflecting a subject's (potentially mistaken or unreliable) perceptions, opinions or judgments. If there is a personalized narrator, it may be her subjective viewpoint which colours the portrayal of the states of affairs in the text. However, depending on the narrative stance adopted [4] states of affairs may also reflect the words, perceptions, thoughts, feelings or judgements of (one or more) characters in the story, even if this not explicitly marked by an introductory verb of speech, thought or perception, or a psych verb. This phenomenon is usually referred to as Free Indirect Discourse, or Represented Speech and Thought (cf. Banfield (1982), Caenepeel (1989), Cohn (1966), McHale (1978), Wiebe (1991)). The following passage, which describes the reflections and contemplations of the third person character Eveline, constitutes an example of this third type of focus, which we will refer to as a *perspectival* one:

(8) But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married—she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. (Joyce, *Eveline*)

2.1.2 The News Reports Corpus

Event Updating Focus The purpose of newspaper reports differs from that of narrative fiction in some obvious ways. The main goal of such reports is to inform the reader of significant recent events in the world. This is realized through what we will refer to as the *event updating focus.* Consider, for instance, the following extract, which like the passage cited in (5) above consists of events:

[4] See Friedman (1955), Lanser (1981) and Stanzel (1969) for a discussion of different types of narrative viewpoints.

(9) The war to free Kuwait began a few minutes before midnight last night, as squadrons of American fighter-bombers blasted Baghdad. And early today the Ministery of Defence confirmed that British forces were also involved 'in military action'. The American F-15Es took off at 9.50 pm GMT from the largest US air base in central Saudi Arabia. 'There were loud explosions, obviously bombs, in three parts of the city,' the American Cable News Network, CNN, quoted one of its correspondents as saying. 'The liberation of Kuwait has begun,' President George Bush said in a statement read by his White House spokesman. The spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said the President would address the American nation. The White House said the US-led attack was aimed at Iraqi troops in both Iraq and Kuwait. The American broadcasting networks in the Iraqi capital reported brilliant flashes of light, thunderous explosions and heavy anti-aircraft fire in the sky. The attack began about 3am on a moonless night. A squadron of British Tornado ground attack also took off from Bahrain just after 2am local time (11 pm GMT). The war began roughly 19 hours after the United Nations deadline passed for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. (*The Daily Record*, 17/1/1991)

Although it consists entirely of events, the discourse in (9) does not *narrate* these events. Unlike in the case of (5) the ordering of the sentences on the page is not crucial for a correct interpretation of te text. This is borne out by the fact that if the sentences are placed in a different order the meaning of the text will not fundamentally change.[5]

(10) The war to free Kuwait began a few minutes before midnight last night, as squadrons of American fighter-bombers blasted Baghdad. 'The liberation of Kuwait has begun,' President George Bush said in a statement read by his White House spokesman. The American F-15Es took off at 9.50 pm GMT from the largest US air base in central Saudi Arabia. And early today the Ministery of Defence confirmed that British forces were also involved 'in military action'. The war began roughly 19 hours after the United Nations deadline passed for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. 'There were loud explosions, obviously bombs, in three parts of the city,' the American Cable News Network , CNN, quoted one of its correspondents as saying. The American broadcasting networks in the Iraqi capital reported brilliant flashes of light, thunderous explosions and heavy anti-aircraft fire in the sky. The attack began about 3am on a moonless night. A squadron of British Tornado ground attack aircraft also took off from Bahrain just after 2am local time (11 pm GMT). The spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said the President would address the American nation. The White House said the US-led attack was aimed at Iraqi troops in both Iraq and Kuwait.

[5]This does not mean that staging does not play a role in such texts, but rather that it is governed by different principles (cf. Section 3.2. below).

Descriptive Focus The states of affairs described in the newspaper reports also differ from the ones described in the narrative corpus in that they have *actual* rather than imaginary status: they make reference to a world shared by the reporter and the recipients of the text. At the same time, however, the referential context of the reported events and the immediate situational context of the recipient of the text do not coincide (cf.2.3 infra), so that the reader may need access to descriptive facts about their setting and circumstances. This goal is realized through the *descriptive* focus of part of the reports, as in the following example:

(11) The six-lane highway from the Gulf coast towns of Dhahran, Damman and Jubail was crowded with cars and trucks piled high with personal belongings. Most of those escaping planned to stay with relatives and friends by the Red Sea and in the western mountains. (*The Daily Express*, 16/1/91)

Perspectival Focus Finally, the factual/informative character of the new reports has repercussions for the way point of view can be represented. While it is possible, and indeed common, for a journalist to colour statements from her own point of view or from the ideological stance of the newspaper concerned, the views of third persons (such as leading politicians, commentators, spokeswomen etc.) may constitute an important part of the news. The representation of such views and opinions need not be marked explicitly by means of an introductory verb of speech. The content of the italicized sentences in the following newsreport extract, for instance, must be assigned to Lord Cledwyn rather than to the reporter:

(12) Lord Cledwyn called on the government to give clear evidence that sanctions had failed.'We all abhor the possibility of war, no one of consequence or sense wants war.' *If the UN security council had wanted war they could have driven President Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait five months ago, but they had held back to enable diplomatic peace efforts to go ahead.* (*The Independent*, 16/1/91]

This discourse is akin to the one in (8) above, in that it contributes to the perspectival focus by indirectly representing the point of view of a third person. Note, however, that a journalist will lack the perspectival omniscience which characterises many novels and short stories: in terms of representing the points of view of third persons the journalist will be restricted to a representation of their statements (as opposed to their private thoughts and judgements), since she will not have access to what goes on in the heads of actual people. Thus the nonfictional character of the newsreports puts constraints on the representation of point of view.

In sections 3 and 4 below we will discuss how the foci of the two text types contribute to the structure of the texts, and affect the use of aspectual constructions.

2.2 Tenor of a Discourse

The tenor of a discourse predicts the selection of options in the interpersonal component. At first blush the two corpora seem to be similar in this respect: due to their *textual* nature there is no immediate communicative context shared between the producer of the discourse and its recipient, or the time of production of the discourse and the time at which it is received. The two text types do, however, differ significantly in terms of the *degree of distance* between text production and reception.

2.2.1 The Narrative Fiction Corpus

In the case of the narrative texts, there is no clear relationship between the referential domain of the text and that of the utterance event. Although a fictional narrative can be viewed as a communicative transaction between its (historical) author and her (historical) audience, throughout the actual reading process the author and her co-ordinates in space or time will be totally extraneous to the text: the actual context in which the real life author participated at the time of writing the text is dissociated from the context set up by the text itself. At the same time the utterance, which is decontextualised with respect to the actual historical world, is recontextualised in an (imaginary) alternative world (cf. Caenepeel (1989)). Because of this cutting of the link between the text and the the co-ordinates of its production, the narrative texts do not have a deictic centre that links the text to its actual utterance event. Caenepeel and Sandström (1992) refer to this as the *bracketing of the speech point*[6].

The most salient consequence of the bracketing of the speech point is that actual deictic time reference is no longer possible, since the states of affairs described in the text and the actual speech time cannot be placed on the same temporal continuum (the actual time line). The loss of this potential for deictic temporal reference is compensated for by the construction of a *narrative time line*, i.e. an imaginary time line which derives its existence solely from the text, and which bears no direct relation to the actual time line.[7] The narrative time line compensates for the impossibility of deictic reference on the real time line by providing a text-internal system of temporal reference.

The bracketing of the speech time and the corresponding construction of a narrative time line have important repercussions for the function of tense in narrative texts. In temporal semantic accounts a tensed sentence is typically assumed to be interpreted at an index which represents its speech time. In the light of what we have said about the bracketing of the speech time in narrative texts, however, the actual speech point cannot in such cases be involved in the evaluation and temporal interpretation of tensed sentences. In the absence of an index for speech time, tense will lose the deictic capacity it exhibits in other discourse types, and instead take on a role that is often referred to as *anaphoric* (cf. Kamp and Rohrer (1983), Partee (1984)). Essentially, this means that tense signals that the narrative context is maintained. Since this narrative context is self-contained in the sense that it is independent from the actual speech point, the temporal location of events with respect to each other on the narrative time line becomes the focus for their temporal interpretation—the phenomenon we introduced in section 2.1 as the *narration of events*.

[6] See also Sandström (1993) for a more detailed discussion of this notion.

[7] As Sandström (1993) points out, however, a narrative timeline has properties in common with the real timeline. For example, both can be modelled as dense, linear point structures, on which precedence and other relations between times can be defined in the usual way.

In past time narratives the discontinuing of the past tense will signal that the narrative context is discontinued, i.e. that we enter the discourse and temporal realm of the narrator. In such cases a fictional speech time (and with it a fictional point of evaluation) is construed, with respect to which the narrative events will be 'past'; and in this respect the text will have a deictic centre to which the narrative as a whole can be related. Such a fictional speech time, however, will not bear any clear relationship to the actual production time of the text, or to the time at which the text is received. Moreover, it is not necessary for the interpretation of past tensed sentences in a narrative—something which is borne out by the fact that most narratives lack a fictional speech time. And finally, even in texts where a fictional speech time is established, past tensed event sentences will still derive their temporal interpretation from their position with respect to other events on the narrative time line, rather than their temporal position with respect to the fictional speech time.

2.2.2 The News Reports

We have already seen that in the newspaper corpus the relationship the text and the actual world is far less indeterminate than in the case of the narrative texts. The same holds for the relationship between the production of the text and its reception. Although the journalist and her readers do not share an immediate context for temporal and spatial reference, a larger shared context will be assumed, to which deixis can revert and with respect to which deictic expressions such as **yesterday**, **tomorrow** can be evaluated. This will provide tensed expressions with an index for speech time, so that they can be located deictically on the real time line. In sections 3 and 4 we will describe the syntactic and semantic repercussions of this.

The distance between the text's producer and its recipient is thus considerably smaller in the news reports than in the narrative fictional texts. It is worth pointing out, however, that in other types of texts in the Gulf War Corpus this distance will be smaller still. Many commentaries and editorials, for instance, are characterized by (the assumption of) minimal social and ideological distance between the writer and her readership. This will result in a much more varied use of the Mood system than in the case of the reports, which largely consist of indicative declarative sentences. Similarly, in certain types of narratives the text's implied author may occasionally adopt a stance of chatty familiarity with the reader—something which will have repercussions for the choice of register. However, such issues fall outside the scope of this deliverable.

2.3 Mode

The mode of discourse is the result of a particular selection of options from three simultaneous parameters: the language role, the medium, and the channel of discourse (cf. Lavid (1993)). In these respects the texts types in the corpus are largely similar. In both cases the language role is constitutive, since the text creates the entire exchange. Both text types are in the written medium, and written to be read. And, congruent to this, both types are received through the graphic channel.

3 Events and States

In this section we will show how the aspectual role of a tensed sentence and the way it is contextualized varies depending on the role played by tense in the discourse context. We will pay particular attention to the way in which the different foci associated with each discourse types outlined in section 2.1 above are realized aspectually.

One of the novel aspects of Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) was that it drew attention to the relationship between the aspectual type of sentences and their temporal ordering in a discourse. In the DRT framework discourse rules stipulate how, depending on the aspectual type of a sentence, the reference time of the sentence will be manipulated, resulting in a particular temporal interpretation. The DRT prediction is that sentences exhibiting an event profile will introduce a temporal update into the discourse, while state sentences will not. We already pointed out in section 1 that in some cases applying this rule will lead to the wrong predictions; we also suggested that this is due to the fact that different discourse types have different discourse rules associated with them, which will license different uses of tense and aspect combinations. In this section we will explore this claim further. We look at the way events and states function at the discourse level in the two text types, especially in the light of the contextual parameters outlined in the previous section.

Different proposals have been made to characterize how the aspectual profile of a sentence can be derived from its component parts (see eg Hinrichs (1986)). In this paper we follow Moens (1987), where the aspectual profile of a sentence is represented in terms of an aspectual transition network. In this network aspectual types can be coerced by different operators, such as the progressive, the perfect, temporal adverbials and complement constructions. Following Caenepeel (1989) we will classify culmination and culminated process expressions in the simple form as events; lexical states, progressives, perfects, habituals, and modals will be viewed as states.

From DRT we adopt the view that event sentences and state sentences play distinct roles at the discourse level, but with the further specification that this role will depend on the discourse type. Unlike in the DRT approach, however, we will also draw a distinction between the events and states at the representational level, to capture the distinct role roles they play in discourse. We follow a proposal set out in more detail in Sandström (1993) which combines

> the tense-logical traditon of seeing tense as a sentential operator, i.e. an operator on propositional entities, and a tradition (in which Discourse Representation Theory stands) where tense expresses a relation between a speech event and an eventuality, which is a logical operator, referred to by the sentence minus its tense. The event-state distinction in the former tradition becomes a distinction in terms of properties of the truth-intervals of propositions; in the latter tradition, or rather, in DRT, it is (...) a distinction in terms of the type of referent introduced. (Sandström 1993: 75)

Sandström defines the difference between event sentences and state sentences in terms of the status of the tenseless expression. An event expression is viewed as a *referential expression*, while a state expression denotes *a property of a time*. At the discourse level, event sentences *introduce events as discourse referents*, while state sentences *ascribe propositions to times*.[8] Thus, in the semantics we adopt, states *hold at times*, while events of certain types *occur*.[9] In what follows we show how these semantic properties can be related to the functioning of events and states in the two text types we have studied.

3.1 The Narrative Fiction Corpus

3.1.1 Events

In this section we look at the way events function in narrative texts. We claim that due to the bracketing of the speech point, event sentences in narrative are contextualized in a way different from other text types.

In most temporal semantic accounts, a tensed sentence is viewed as a proposition to be evaluated at the speech point. If a sentence is in the past tense, it is specified that a relation of precedence must hold between a temporal referent and the speech point. In the previous section we have pointed out, however, that an important characteristic of narrative texts lies in the *bracketing* of the speech point. Because of this, the point with respect to which the past tense signals precedence is removed, so that tense ceases to play the role of locating the referent of a tensed sentence. This property of narrative texts interacts with the semantic properties of event expressions outlined above in a particular way. Sandström (1993) shows that since event expressions are referential expressions, they cannot be given a temporal argument (this in contrast with state expressions, cf. below). The bracketing of the speech time, the only potential time of evaluation for events, therefore means that event sentences in narrative texts no longer function as propositions: they do not say that an event of a particular kind *occurred*, but merely *present* that event (cf. Sandström (1993)). This ties in with what we said earlier about the construction of a narrative time line on which events are situated with respect to each other (in the absence of the deictic centre of a speech point): when they are placed on such a time line, the propositionhood of events is suspended, and only their referential properties are left. This explains why event sentences in narratives appear to be *'telling themselves'* (cf. Benveniste (1966); see also Caenepeel (1989))—i.e. that they appear to be perspectivally neutral: the introduction of a perspective requires a point of evaluation which is lacking in event sentences in narrative.

Let us now consider how events are contextualized if a narrative time line is constructed. As we have seen in section 2, the setting out of events in a linear temporal order is usually viewed as the primary characteristic of narrative discourse. This would suggest that the temporal ordering of events with respect to each other constitutes a sufficient condition for narrative coherence. This is in line with the DRT view that a new event in a narrative discourse will

[8] A similar distinction is adopted in Galton (1984), Löbner (1988) and Herweg (1991).

[9] The fact that state sentences do not introduce a discourse referent by themselves may seem to be at odds with the observation that they can be referred to by means of a pronoun. In the semantics we adopt, however, both states holding and events occurring can be reported as *facts*, and it is these facts which in both cases be referred to by means of a demonstrative or a pronoun. At the same time it is only in the case of an event that the fact is one related to the existence of a temporal entity of a particular type (viz. the event). In the case of a state, the fact expresses a property of a particular time, viz. that the state holds at this time. Thanks to G. Sandström for useful comments on this point.

automatically be interpreted at an updated reference time, creating the impression that time 'moves forward', and lending temporal coherence to the discourse.

A closer look at the data, however, shows that the updating mechanism as such is not sufficient to lend coherence to a sequence of consecutive events. To see this, consider the following examples:

(13) A car stopped in the car park. Anna put the kettle on.

(14) A car stopped in the car park. The dog barked.

(15) A car stopped in the car park. Anna sliced some radishes.

While it is plausible in pragmatic terms for the two events in the discourse in (15) to follow one another in time, the discourse nevertheless sounds odd. The discourses in (13) and (14), in contrast, are more acceptable. We claim that this is due to the fact that interpreting (13) and (14) not only involves the inference that the second event happens after the first, but also that it is triggered by it, or constitutes some kind of reponse to it: Anna puts the kettle on because someone has come home, for instance, or the dog barks in response to the arrival. Example (15) seems odd because such a link is much harder to establish. But if we interpret Anna's slicing of some radishes as a reaction of (perhaps feigned) indifference to the sound of the car, the discourse becomes acceptable.[10] We hold that it is this imputed relationship, which is not a purely temporal one and which, following Moens (1987) we will call a *consequential* one, that provides the principal source of coherence between events in a narrative. The sequential relationship between the sentences in examples (13)-(15) above follows from the consequential one, but in itself does not constitute a sufficient source of coherence. Consequentiality thus constitutes the 'glue' of narrative in the sense that it lends coherence to events which do not have recourse to the deictic centre of a speech point.

The relation of consequentiality subsumes a family of more specific relations, of which the following are the most important:

An event e' is consequential *upon an event e if*

(i) e causes or takes part in causing e',
(ii) e creates or takes part in creating the appropriate conditions for e' to take place,
(iii) e evokes or is part of what evokes e' as a response,
(iv) one of the relations (i)-(iii) holds between e and e' together (and possibly more events) and another event e'' (or several other events).

[10] This is also born out by psycholinguistic experiments. For instance, Black and Bern (1981) tried to show that discourses in which there is a 'distant causal' (i.e. a consequential) connection between the described eventualities are processed more quickly than those in which it is absent, by contrasting discourses consisting of two causally related states of affairs (as in 1') with ones where the causal connection is lacking, or more difficult to establish (as in (2')):

(1') The cat leapt up on the kitchen table. Fred picked up the cat and put it outside.

(2') The cat rubbed against the kitchen table. Fred picked up the cat and put it outside.

Upon conducting the experiment, they found that subjects would infer a distant causal relationship even in cases like (2'), where Black and Bern had intended a purely temporal one. Boogaert (1992) gives an illuminating discussion of the implications of these psycholinguistic experiments for text processing issues.

(i) is Moens' subrelation of causation; (ii) is a generalization of his enablement relation that takes care of planned or conventionalized sequences of actions as well; and (iii) is a relation which (for reasons we need not go into here) cannot be subsumed under either (i) or (ii).

If sequences of events in a narrative cannot be connected by a consequentiality relation (and in the absence of explicit connectors such as temporal adverbials) the temporal ordering relationship between the events will remain indeterminate. The absence of a consequential relation between events, which is unusual in narrative, will often generate a particular stylistic effect: it embues the occurrence of the events with a randomness and arbitrariness, their disconnectedness creating the impression that they are 'of no consequence'. This effect is often enhanced by the use of the narrative present rather than the past tense, as in the following examples:

(16) Beyond the window a car starts up, an aeroplane passes overhead. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*)

(17) Greg, in the old gun-room that serves now as telephone room, makes two calls to London and one to Boston. Bob walks back from the village pub in the dark, a trifle unsteadily. (Lively, *Next to Nature, Art*)

At the structural level, sequences of consequentially related events in a narrative are organized into linear event structures, which we will call *episodic structures*. Episodic structures are in turn projected onto the narrative timeline. Consequentiality, episodic structures and the narrative timeline are thus intimately connected and serve at different levels to compensate for the loss of deictic temporal reference engendered by the bracketing of the speech point.

On the basis of this, we can now specify further how the *narrative focus* is realized in narrative texts. An event referent introduced by a new event sentence in a narrative cannot be deictically related to the speech point. Instead, it will be integrated into the evolving or current episodic structure, by virtue of its being consequentially related to an earlier event. Because of the nature of the consequentiality relationship, the new event will normally be interpreted as introducing a temporal update[11] but this relation will be *derived* from the consequential one.

The following discourse, already cited above, illustrates how events combine into an episodic structure:

(18) Gabriel began to carve second helpings as soon as he had finished the round without serving himself. Everyone protested loudly so that he compromised by taking a long draught of stout for he had found the carving hot work. Mary Jane settled down quietly to her supper but Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia were still toddling round the table, walking on each other's heels, getting in each other's way and giving each other unheeded orders. Mr Browne begged of them to sit down and eat their suppers but they said there was time enough so that, at last Freddy Malins stood up and, capturing Aunt Kate, plumbed her down on her chair amid general laughter. (Joyce, *The Dead*)

[11]This is, however, not necessarily the case. Other relations, such as inclusion (or subevent relation) may also apply. For a discussion of this see Caenepeel (1989), Sandström (1993)

Each new event in this passage is interpreted as a response to the preceding event, or as enabled by it. This inference is not based on world knowledge about the nature of the events as such: rather, a *conceptual scheme* (cf. Boogaert 1992) appears to be activated when a reader is presented with a narrative discourse, that gears her towards establishing consequential links between neighbouring events in the text. If the events are ordered differently, different consequential links will be detected and, as we have shown above, this will inevitably lead to a fundamentally different interpretation of the discourse. Example (6) above illustrates this.

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that the kind of narratives we are looking at, viz. novels and short stories, typically consist of different episodic structures. These episodic structures will be projected onto the same narrative time line, but they will be separated from each other by temporal gaps, commentary passages, etc. Episodic structures may also run concurrently (i.e. in parallel) on the narrative timeline. The start of a new episodic structure will usually be reflected in the lay-out of a text by means of a paragraph break or the beginning of a new chapter. In the following section we will see how this type of organisation affects the use of the past perfect in narrative.

In summary, we have argued that due to the absence of a clear relationship between events and their speech point in narrative texts, events lose their only point of evalution and will no longer be propositional in nature. Because of this, the type of coherence relations typically realized with propositions (cf. section 3.2 infra) do not apply; instead, events in a narrative are contextualized through a relation of consequentiality. A sequence of consequentially related events forms an episodic structure, which will be projected on the narrative time line. The establishment of consequentiality relations, episodic structures and a narrative time line thus constitute crucial interrelated aspects of narrative understanding.

3.1.2 States

We argued earlier that events and states play different roles in narrative discourse, and that events, which at the semantic level are treated as discourse referents, are incorporated into a narrative by being added to the current episodic structure. This was related to the bracketing of the speech point in narrative texts, which means that event sentences no longer function as propositions, since their only point of evaluation disappears.

Let us now turn our attention to states and state sentences in narrative. In the semantics outlined in Sandström (1993), a state expression is not referential but denotes *a property of a time*; and a state sentence will *ascribe a proposition to a time*. As in the case of event sentences, state sentences in narrative texts do not have access to the (bracketed) speech point as a potential point of evaluation. But, unlike events, state expressions cannot in themselves acquire the status of discourse referents, and stative sentences are incapable of introducing as a discourse referent the moment of which the state is predicated. Instead, the time at which a state is said to hold or be true must be supplied by some other source; and such a source can be supplied by a discourse referent in the narrative context.[12] More specifically, the proposition denoted by a state sentence will be evaluated, i.e. taken to be asserted or hold, at the time on the narrative timeline reached in the current episodic structure when

[12]Among other things. It can also be supplied more explicitly by means of a temporal adverbial.

the state is encountered.

This means that the bracketing of the speech time does not disturb the basic propositional nature of state sentence; as long as a time of evaluation is provided contextuall, states, unlike events, will still be able to function propositionally in narrative contexts.

Consider the following example:

(19) Then he pulled open the drawers, filled with his mother's things, and looked at them. There were lavender bags among the linen, and their scent was fresh and pleasant. (Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*)

After the first event sentence, the current episodic structure which the events described in the first sentence form part of ceases to grow. Instead, the point on the timeline which has been reached as the first state is introduced becomes an *anchoring point*, at which the state (and all subsequent states) will be evaluated. The focus of the discourse shifts from narrative development (underpinned by the growing episodic structure) to the properties of entities, places and characters in the story—in this particular case the properties of the drawers that the third person protagonist is examining.

Because of the fact that they are evaluated at a contextually provided anchoring point, states in narratives are said to 'overlap' with the eventuality which precedes them (cf. Kamp and Rohrer (1983), Partee (1984)). It is worth noting, however, that as in the case of events, the mere temporal ordering of a state with respect to a contextually provided time as such does not constitute a sufficient condition for coherent discourse. Consider the following example, which is adapted from Boogaert (1992):

(20) ?I opened the door. My hair was black.

Although in truth-conditional terms the state *my hair was black* may overlap with the event *I opened the door,* the discourse is odd. This is due to the fact that it is difficult to impute a non-temporal coherence relationship between the state and the preceding (or possibly a subsequent) sentence. Such a relationship can be imputed more easily in (21), which does not exhibit the oddness of (20):

(21) I opened the door. My hair was wet (and the sudden blast of cold air made me shiver)

The difference between both discourses is described by Caenepeel and Sandström (1992) in terms of *contextual relevance*. The fact that the narrator's hair is wet is relevant in the context in that it affects her reaction to opening the door. The fact that her hair is black, on the other hand, has no relevance here. Thus, although state sentences will normally be interpreted as overlapping with the surrounding discourse, it is not this temporal relation which lends coherence to the way they are integrated in a discourse. Instead, discourse relations other than consequentiality will become salient and lend relevance to the occurrence of a state sentence at a particular point in a narrative; these are the discourse relations which typically hold between propositions, and which include *Background*, *Explanation*, *Parallel* and *Contrast*. In Caenepeel (1989) these propositional relations are collectively referred to under the umbrella term of topical relations. In the rest of this deliverable we will refer to them as *topical/propositional* relations.

To recapitulate: with the introduction of a stative sentence in a narrative, an anchor is 'dropped', so that the narrative movement (propelled by consequentiality relations between events) is suspended, and the focus of the discourse shifts to the properties of individuals and locations described. The introduction of such properties will arise from contextual considerations. As referents or locations are introduced, some, but clearly not all, of their characteristic properties will become relevant; and characteristics which may be irrelevant in an initial description may become relevant at a later state —for instance, the fact that someone is allergic to wheat may not become relevant until she is offered a sandwich. States in narrative discourse thus serve to realize the *descriptive focus* referred to in section 3.1.

Finally, it was pointed out in Caenepeel (1989) that stative sentences in narrative texts have the potential of introducing the *point of view* or *perspective* other than that of the narrator. Interpreting a state as perspectivized means interpreting it as evaluated (perceived, contemplated, asserted) by a character in the narrative world. Caenepeel (1989) claims that this potential is always present in states in a narrative, and outlines how it is activated in particular contexts.[13]

The observation that state sentences exhibit this particular potential ties in well with the semantic and contextual approach outlined here. In the present framework, the time argument of state expressions, which enables them to function as propositions inside a narrative context, also explains their potential for perspectivization. Where there is a propostion it is always possible to ask for the source of that proposition (even though this source may not always be made explicit). Or, as Sandström (1993) puts it, we have *attitudes* to propositions: we believe them to be true, we deny them, we ponder them, we act upon them. This explains the latent or explicit subjective quality of state sentences in a narrative.

State sentences in narrative may thus also serve to realize the *perspectival focus* referred to in section 3.1. In such cases, the anchoring point at which the state is evaluated is activated as a *point of view centre*, i.e. as a deictic centre *in the textual world* coinciding with the perspective of one or more characters in the text. This means the time on the narrative timeline which is selected as point of evaluation is not merely used as a hook, as a place to stop, a point at which the reader can evaluate propositions concerning the narrative world; it also constitutes a point at which someone in the narrative world evaluates propositions concerning her world.[14] In the following passage, for instance, the first stative sentence (It was nonsense and obscene nonsense) signals not only the suspension of the current episodic structure, but also the introduction of a point of view refraction. This point of view refraction is maintained in the stative sentences which follow it, all of which must be interpreted as reflecting the words (and the emotions) of Professor Erlin—up to the point where a new event sentence (*He held his nose*) takes us back to the current episodic structure:.

[13]Specifically through the occurrence of subject-oriented constructions within the stative sentence, or the presence of a perspectival sentence in its immediate context. See Caenepeel (1989) for a more detailed discussion of this.

[14]Although this point of view centre may be ambiguous. As Caenepeel (1989) points out, stative sentences in a narrative may hover between objective description and subjective experience. This ambiguity may constitute an important source of dramatic tension.

(22) (...) and at these Professor Erlin lost his wonted calm: he beat the table with his fist, and drowned all opposition with the roar of his fine deep voice. It was nonsense and obscene nonsense. He had forced himself to sit the play out, but he did not know whether he was more bored or nauseated. If that was what the theatre was coming to, then it was high time the police stepped in and closed the playhouses. He was no prude and could laugh as well as anyone at the witty immorality of a farce at the Palais Royal, but here was nothing but filth. With an emphatic gesture he held his nose (...) (Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*)

Because of their subjective quality, perspectivized states are not necessarily 'true' in the narrative world: a character's thought or jugement may be very idiosyncratic, or even mistaken. Thus the perspectivized states in example (22) above clearly represent only the opinions of the protagonist Professor Erlin, and not any 'truth' at a particular time on the time line, or the point of view of the narrator. Similarly in (23)

(23) He stopped again, rose again, and seemed quite embarrassed. He was more in love with her than Emma had supposed (...) (Austen, *Emma*)

the second sentence must be interpreted as Emma's mistaken belief: as any reader of *Emma* will know, the male protagonist (Frank Churchill) is not in love with Emma, but with Jane Fairfax. What a character says, thinks or even, in some cases, sees thus does not always become integrated into the 'facts' of the narrative world.

3.2 The News Reports Corpus

3.2.1 Events

We saw in the previous section that events in narrative fiction are incorporated through a relationship of consequentiality into the current episodic structure, which is projected onto the narrative time line. We also related the construction of a narrative time line to the inderminate relationship between the actual utterance event and the text which characterises narrative fiction.

Let us now compare this to the use of events in the news reports. We already pointed out that in the reports, unlike in the case of narrative fiction, there is an immediate link between the deictic centre of the utterance event and the reported events. This deictic centre, which is implicitly shared by the reporter and her readers, will assume a primary role in the establishment of temporal coherence, and tense will assume the deictic role of temporally locating the referent of tensed sentences.

We also pointed out in the previous section that for event sentences to function propositionally they need recourse to a speech point. Because of the implicit availability of a speech point in the news reports, the propositionhood of event sentences is not suspended. The past tense event sentences in the news reports will therefore express that events (of a certain type) *occurred at some time in the past* (rather than merely presenting them). This is in line with the communicative purpose of the reports, which is to inform the reader of recent actual events.

Because the speech point is not bracketed in the news reports, events function as propositions and will be connected by topical/propositional rather than by consequential relations.[15] In the absence of consequential relations, no episodic structures and no narrative time line will be construed. The implicit availability of the utterance event for temporal reference in the news reports thus finds an immediate correlate in the absence of a narrative time line.

Consider the following example:

(24) American Secretary of State Richard Cheney said last night the allied air-strike on Iraqi military targets "appeared to have gone very well" at a press conference at the Pentagon last night. He denied, however, that any attempt had been made to kill President Saddam Hussein. Facing the world media with the head of the American armed forces, General Colin Powell at the Pentagon, Mr Cheny said "we achieved generally a high degree of tactical surprise." At the start of the press conference, at 2.30am GMT, Mr Cheney said that he and President Bush had signed the operation's "execution order". (*The Scotsman* 17/11/91)

The events in this report all describe statements made by American Secretary of State Richard Cheney. They are placed deictically with respect to the utterance event by means of the adverbial **last night**, and are not consequentially related. Correspondingly, their temporal relation with respect to each other is unclear— while it is possible that the statements were made in the order in which they appear in the text this is by no means necessary, and it does not affect the interpretation of the text. Instead, the events are related by means of topical/propositional relations (the topic being broadly the American official view of the start of the gulf war).

While the location of the reporting events in the discourse in (24) remains constant, that of the events in the following report (already cited earlier) shifts continuously. Here, the discourse takes as its topic events in the Gulf War over the last 24 hours (rather than the way they are commented upon or represented by officials), and this connection seems to provide a sufficient link between the sentences for the discourse to be coherent. Note that once again the events are not consequentially linked:

[15]There are of course exceptions to this. Just as events in a narrative may occasionally lack a consequential connection, in rare instances a consequential relation between two events is highlighted in the news reports. In this respect it is probably more accurate to define discourse relations in terms of local discourse contexts rather than discourse types. At the same time, however, it cannot be ignored that there is a clear correlation between the text types we have looked at and the kind of relations that *typically* apply between events.

(25) The war to free Kuwait began a few minutes before midnight last night, as squadrons of American fighter-bombers blasted Baghdad. 'The liberation of Kuwait has begun,' President George Bush said in a statement read by his White House spokesman. The American F-15Es took off at 9.50 pm GMT from the largest US air base in central Saudi Arabia. And early today the Ministery of Defence confirmed that British forces were also involved 'in military action'. The war began roughly 19 hours after the United Nations deadline passed for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. 'There were loud explosions, obviously bombs, in three parts of the city,' the American Cable News Network, CNN, quoted one of its correspondents as saying. The American broadcasting networks in the Iraqi capital reported brilliant flashes of light, thunderous explosions and heavy anti-aircraft fire in the sky. The attack began about 3am on a moonless night. A squadron of British Tornado ground attack aircraft also took off from Bahrain just after 2am local time (11 pm GMT). The spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said the President would address the American nation. The White House said the US-led attack was aimed at Iraqi troops in both Iraq and Kuwait. *The Daily Record*, 17/1/91)

As already pointed out earlier, the ordering of the events in this text does not reflect the order in which they occurred; indeed, if we try to reconstruct their order of occurrence it becomes clear that the text moves backwards an forwards in time. Temporal information about the occurrence of the events is provided by temporal adverbials the majority of which are deictic (**a few minutes before midnight last night, early today, 9.50 pm GMT etc.**)[16]. And although the temporal ordering of the events with respect to each other can be reconstructed on the basis of this, this is not crucial for an adequate understanding of the text. In the absence of explicit temporal information events are interpreted as having taken place at a time in the recent past; their exact temporal location is irrelevant and not, as in the case of narrative events, determined by their position in the discourse vis-a-vis neighbouring events.

In summary, the deictic nature of the events in the news reports ties in with the *event updating focus* of the reports. Because of the nature of the relationship between the utterance event and the reported events, the events are not structured as a story, and lack the narrative development of a story: it is the deictic **now** of reporter and reader, and the topical connection between events established from the viewpoint of this deictic centre, that lend coherence to the texts.

3.2.2 States

In the semantics we adopt, state sentences express a proposition, viz. that a certain property holds of a certain time. In narrative contexts, we have seen, this time will, in the absence of a temporal adverbial, be supplied by the last event in the current episodic structure, i.e. the point on the time line which has been reached when the first state is introduced. With

[16] Note that even adverbials like **9.50 pm GMT** are to be understood as deictic, ie as 9.50 **GMT last night**.

the introduction of the state the narrative movement propelled by consequential relations between events is suspended—hence our choice of the term 'anchoring point' to denote the time of evaluation of a state in a narrative.

The structure of the news reports, as we have seen, is different. Since the speech time has not been bracketed it will be available as point of evaluation for stative sentences. Moreover, since events are not consequentially related the notion of an anchoring point within a developing episodic structure becomes vacuous. For the same reason, tense does not signal the continuation of the narrative context—as we have seen it assumes a deictic function instead. And finally, both event sentences and state sentences express propositions. This has a number of consequences. Tense shifts in the news reports will not give rise to shifts in context, as they do in narratives (where a change from the past tense to the present will signal that the narrative context is left and the narrator's discourse is entered): since both past and present tense sentences in the reports express propositions which are deictically related to the speech point and topically/propositionally related to their context, changes in tense do not affect the continuity of the discourse. This is reflected in the fact that such shifts occur with much higher frequency than in the narrative texts. Similarly, the contrast between the discourse function of event sentences and state sentences becomes minimal, since both express propositions and are contextualized as propositions evaluated at the speech point. The oscillation between temporal progression and its suspension, which characterizes the event/state alternation in narratives, is therefore absent in the news reports.

The following passage illustrates all these points:

> (26) Some petrol stations ran out of supplies in the world's richest oil nation yesterday as tens of thousands headed away from the vulnerable eastern area of the kingdom. The majority of oil wells, staorage tanks and refineries are located there. The six-lane highway from the Gulf coast towns of Dhahran, Damman and Jubail was crowded with cars and trucks piled high with personal belongings. Most of those escaping planned to stay with relatives and friends by the Red Sea and in the western mountains. And yesterday, worried British wives living near Riyadh were promised: "You won't be left alone in a chemical attack." Scores of women married to British Aerospace Staff fear they could be stranded at home during missile raid (...). But BAe chiefs began moving couples into new homes close to key bases and training centres. Spokesman Ray Chadwick said:"(...)". (*The Daily Express*, 16/1/91)

While states in the news reports will often select the speech time as their point of evaluation, they do not, however, lose their potential to be evaluated at a contextually provided time. In contexts such as the one in example (26) the speech point is made salient and therefore constitutes an obvious evaluation point. In other contexts, however, a shift away from the speech point may be functional. Recall what we said earlier about the relation between the propositional nature of states and their capacity for introducing a perspective. As in narratives, this potential is sometimes exploited in the news reports to represent the point of view of a third person without having to quote their words directly. Consider again the following example:

(27) Lord Cledwyn called on the government to give clear evidence that sanctions had failed. We all abhor the possibility of war, no one of consequence or sense wants war, he said. If the UN security council had wanted war they could have driven President Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait five months ago, but they had held back to enable diplomatic peace efforts to go ahead. [*The Independent*, 16/1/91]

The last two sentences in this passage, both of which are stative, are preceded by what Caenepeel (1989) refers to as a *perspectival sentence* (in this case constituted by an event sentence which directly reports Lord Cledwyns words). As we already pointed out earlier, in narrative contexts the angle of a perspectival sentence will often combine with the propositional qualities of subsequent stative sentences to introduce a perspectival refraction into the discourse. A similar effect applies here: we do not attribute the content of the stative sentences to the reporter, but instead infer that it constitutes an indirect continuation of Lord Cledwyns speech. At the representational level, this possibility arises from the fact that in contexts where the speech point is not bracketed, such as the news reports, states may in principle be evaluated either at the speech point or at a contextually supplied point. Which of these options applies depends on contextual considerations. In the passage in (26) above, the use of deictic adverbials and the present tense in neighbouring sentences, as well as the content of the past tense stative sentences, all contribute to making salient the speech point as deictic centre and point of evaluation for the states. But in (27), the presence of the perspectival verb and the elaborative link between the directly quoted speech and the content of the stative sentences highlight a time in the context (introduced by the preceding event sentence) as evaluation point. As in narratives, states may therefore be used in the news reports to realize the perspectival focus.

In the following section we turn our attention to a particular tense and aspect combination, viz. the past perfect, and show how the contextual factors outlined so far will affect its use in the text types we have studied.

4 The Use of the Past Perfect

The past perfect has received relatively little attention in the literature so far. Its meaning (often considered to be "relatively straightforward" (Fleischman (1990) 24) tends to be defined (in an implicit or explicit Reichenbachian framework) in terms of the relationship between the temporal location of the state of affairs which combines with the past perfect and a point of orientation in the past. Quirk e.a. (1985) sum up this view as follows:

> The past perfective indicates ANTERIOR TIME, i.e. a time preceding whatever time orientation is signalled by tense or by other elements of the sentence or its context (...) The perfective merely defines an anterior time zone (...) within which the action of the verb takes place. (190)

We already pointed out in section 1 that a definition of the past perfect in purely temporal terms fails to explain why sometimes reference to a state of affairs prior to a past reference point, even though pragmatically plausible, will be infelicitous (as in example (1) above); nor why it may be possible to refer to a prior state of affairs by means of a simple past rather than a past perfect (as in examples (2) and (3)).

In this section we explain these apparent vagaries in terms of the structure of the discourse in which a temporal construction occurs. Invoking the properties of the two discourse types outlined in sections 2 and 3, we show how reference to an 'anterior time' is subject to different constraints in different contexts. We also demonstrate that while some restrictions on the use of the past perfect can be explained in the light of some general discourse principles, the actual impact of these principles will differ depending on discourse context. We start off by giving a brief outline of the semantics of the past perfect we adopt.

4.1 Semantics of the Past Perfect

In the work of Jespersen (1924) and others working in the same tradition, the past perfect is treated as an ambiguous category: it may denote either a 'perfect-in-the-past' or a 'past-in-the-past'. This is a view we also adopt.

In the case of a perfect-in-the-past, a past tense is combined with the perfect, which is a stative operator,[17] and so the past perfect will function as a state. More specifically, a perfect-in-the-past will ascribe a *consequent state* (cf. Moens (1987)) to a past time which, as we have seen, must be provided by context. For instance, a past perfect sentence like **he had forgotten the answer** ascribes to a contextually provided past time the state *he has forgotten the answer*, which is the consequent state of the event *he forgot the answer*. While the occurrence of this event is *presupposed* by the use of the past perfect sentence, however, the event itself does not become *introduced as a discourse referent*.[18]

The past perfect in the following passage constitutes an example of a perfect-in-the past:

(28) When he saw Freddy Malins coming across the room to visit his mother Gabriel left the chair free for him and retired into the embrasure of the window. The room had already cleared and from the back room came the clatter of plates and knives. (Joyce, *The Dead*)

The past perfect sentence in this passage conveys that at this point in the narrative the stative proposition *The room has already cleared* could be asserted - either by an anonymous observer or by the character Gabriel. The compatibility of the sentence with *already* (cf. Vlach (1981)) gives syntactic support to this intuition.

Compare this to the past perfects in the following passage from the same short story:

[17] Cf. Moens (1987), Caenepeel(1989).

[18] Thanks to G. Sandström for illuminating feedback on this point.

(29) Mr Browne took another sip of his whisky and said, with sidling mimicry: "Well, you see, I'm the famous Mrs Cassidy, who is reported to have said: "Now, Mary Grimes, if I don't take it, make me take it, for I feel I want it." His hot face had leaned forward a little too confidentially and he had assumed a very low Dublin accent, so that the young ladies, with one instinct, received his speech in silence. (Joyce, *The Dead*)

Here, it would be counterintuitive to say that the two past perfect clauses denote consequent states - indeed, it is not clear what the consequent state of the event *he leaned forward* and *he assumed a very low Dublin accent* could be in this particular case. Instead, the clauses convey that Mr Browne performed both these actions at some point prior to the time in the narrative we have reached (most plausibly as he was telling the joke). At a syntactic level, this past-in-the-past reading is supported by the fact that the clauses cannot combine with **already**.

A past-in-the-past thus states that an event occurred prior to a contextually determined time. Unlike in the case of a perfect-in-the-past, this use of the past perfect *does* lead to the event concerned being introduced as a discourse referent.

4.2 The Past Perfect in Narrative Discourse

In section 3.1 we outlined a number of characteristics of narrative texts. We drew attention to the bracketing of the (actual) speech point in such texts, and the corresponding construction of a narrative time line as chief source of temporal coherence. We also argued that a narrative time line is projected from (at least one, but usually more) episodic structures, which we defined as series of consequentially related events. In this section we will show how these properties affect the use of the use of the past perfect in narrative texts.

We start off by drawing attention to the fact that the use of the past perfect in main clauses in narrative is subject to two general and uncontroversial discourse constraints, which apply equally to other syntactic constructions and other discourse types. We go on to show how these constraints interact with the structure of narrative discourse in the case of the past perfect.

4.2.1 The Constraints

Two general constraints apply to main clauses in a discourse; we refer to them as the *Information Status Constraint* and the *Contextual Relevance Constraint*. They can be paraphrased as follows:

(I) The Information Status Constraint
Each new main clause in a discourse must contain new information.

(II) The Contextual Relevance Constraint
The new information contained in a main clause must cohere in a significant way with its immediate context.

Both constraints are in themselves uncontroversial. The Information Status Constraint stipulates that a new main clause in a discourse has to say something new. At its most crude, it explains why a discourse like (30) is odd:

(30) I got up and left the house. ?I left the house.

It is worth pointing out that new information need not always be propositional in nature.[19] In certain discourse contexts the rephrasing of given information will amplify the already given propostional content with a particular stylistic or interpersonal effect, and in this respect it will add new information. Consider, for instance:

(31) Both his parents died in the accident. So he was an orphan now...

Although the second sentence does not strictly speaking add any new propositional content to the discourse, it contains new information in terms of the angle and the emphasis of the message, and in terms of its argument structure.

Moreover, old information need not always be information that has been asserted explicitly previously in the discourse. Consider:

(32) ?John bought a house. It had a roof.

As Caenepeel and Sandström (1992) point out, this discourse sounds odd because having a roof constitutes a default property of a house and will therefore be inferred in the absence of information to the contrary. Because of this it assumes the status of old information and does not in itself belong in a new main clause. Note, however, that the following discourse is acceptable:

(33) John bought a house. It had a thatched roof.

The reason for the acceptability of (33) is that information other than the fact that the house has a roof has been added. Thus, although in the second sentence of (33) the roof is head of the noun phrase, it is subordinate in informational terms to the property of being thatched. This can be made syntactically explicit by making the roof the topic of the sentence and putting the new information in focus position, as in (34)

(34) John bought a house. The roof was thatched.

Note that the stating of inferred information, or information that can be associated by default with a particular discourse referent, will have informational content in cases where stereotypical relations do not apply: the discourse in (32) for instance, will be more acceptable if John makes a business of buying ruined houses which often do not have roofs. This is in line with Atlas and Levinson's (1981) I-Principle, or Principle of Informativeness, which instructs a speaker to Minimization, or to 'say as little as necessary', and a listener to amplify the informational content of the message, specifically by assuming

> that stereotypical relations obtain between referents or events, unless (i) this is inconsistent with what is taken for granted, [or] (ii) the speaker has broken the maxim of Minimization by choosing a prolix expression. (Levinson (1987): 402)

[19] I am grateful to L. Oversteegen for pointing this out.

The Information Status Constraint thus states that a new main clause has to say something that has not been previously asserted or inferred.

We have already touched briefly upon the notion of contextual relevance in section 3.1. above. The constraint that a new utterance must be relevant in the discourse context in which it occurs is a penchant of the co-operative principle, which leads the hearer or reader to assume that a discourse will be coherent. Upon encountering a new sentence, the hearer or reader will attempt to estblish a relation between the sentence and its preceding discourse. We also pointed out that although event and state sentences become contextually relevant in narrative texts in different ways, neither temporal progression nor temporal overlap *in themselves* constitute sufficient conditions for discourse coherence. We have suggested instead that event sentences in a narrative introduce a new discourse referent which will be contextually relevant if it can be incorporated into the current episodic structure by means of a consequentiality relation. State sentences, in contrast, ascribe a proposition to a a time on the narrative time line. Because of this discourse relations other than consequentiality will be made salient: states cohere with their context through relations that which we have referred to as topical/propositional, and which include Explanation, Parallel, Contrast, Background and Perspective.

Let us now turn to the way the two types of the past perfect described in section 4.1 are affected by both these constraints in narrative texts. As a present-in-the-past is a state, it will be contextualized by means of topical/propositional relations, i.e. relations other than consequentiality. In terms of the two constraints formulated above, this means that a present-in-the-past must contain new information which is propositionally related to its immediate context. A past-in-the-past, in contrast, introduces an event which is looked back upon from a particular time in the past, or a 'flashback'. In the case of more than one past perfect, consecutive past perfect clauses will often be contextualized by means of a consequentiality relation into an extended flashback, as in the following example:

(35) "Would you know him if you met him?" Diana had once asked. "If he appeared, walking towards you in the street." And Mark had replied, after consideration that yes, he was pretty sure he would. (Lively, *According to Mark*).

In addition to this, past-in-the-pasts will also be subject to the Information Status Constraint.

We have seen earlier that narratives consist of at least one, but typically more than one, episodic structure. Both before the first episodic structure on the narrative time line and between different episodic structures there will be 'empty' time zones on the narrative time line. A past perfect, referring back to a state of affairs situated in an anterior time zone in a narrative, can therefore do two things: it can refer to a state of affairs that belongs to the evolving episodic structure, or to one that belongs to an 'empty' span on the time line. In what follows we will look at the effect of the two constraints on the past perfect in both these cases.

4.2.2 Referring Back within the Current Episodic Structure

One obvious repercussion of the Information Status Constraint is that an event which has already been mentioned at its iconic place in the episodic structure it forms part of cannot be referred to by means of a past perfect at a later stage in the discourse, unless new information about the event is added (and assuming it is contextually relevant, so that the second constraint is met). The contrast between (36) and (36) illustrates this:

(36) Ewan went into the house and poured himself a cup of coffee. ?He had gone into the house.

(37) Ewan went into the house, sat down and poured himself a cup of coffee. He had gone into the house feeling tired and crabby (but the invigorating taste of the coffee made him feel better).

We also pointed out earlier, however, that information which assumes given status need not have been asserted explicitly in the discourse. To illustrate this, we showed how nominal referents in a discourse have default inferences associated with them (houses have roofs, people have noses) which will assume the status of given information in the absence of explicit information to the contrary. The existence of such default properties does not belong by itself in a new main clause (except in a context where the default association does not hold). The same applies to event referents in narratives, in the sense that inferred events will assume the status of given information.

What constitutes an inferred event in a narrative depends on the episodic structure of the discourse: the imputed relation of consequentiality between events in a narrative will give rise to inferences about other events which are not explicitly mentioned in the discourse. Consider:

(38) John left the house and drove off to work.

To interpret the event of John driving off to work as consequential upon the event of John leaving the house, we will infer that John walks to his car, opens the door of the car and gets inside, puts the key into the ignition and starts the car. To process the second clause in the discourse all these events will need to assume the status of given information.

It is worth emphasizing that event inferences of this type are generated not by individual events in themselves but by the way events are ordered in a narrative, combined with the establishment of consequential relations between them. This is particularly clear in the following passage, which describes an episodic structure evolving from the event of a girl hurting her foot:

(39) 'Henry, put me down. I'm bleeding all over you.' He didn't pay any attention to her. 'Here, Richard,' he said, 'get that sock and tie it around her ankle.' It was the first time I had even thought of a tourniquet; some kind of doctor I would have made. 'Too tight?' I asked her. (Tartt, *The Secret History*)

When we reach the last sentence in this passage we will infer that the event of of Richard, the I-protagonist, tying the sock around his friend's ankle has taken place. Although this event is not mentioned explicitly in the discourse, it must be inferred because without it the event described by the last sentence cannot be incorporated consequentially into the current episodic structure.

Due to their information status, non-explicitated events inferred on the basis of the consequential development of a narrative cannot be referred back to by means of a past perfect main clause—unless, that is, the occurrence of the event (which constitutes given information) is subordinated to new information which becomes contextually relevant. Compare:

(40) John left the house and drove off to work. ?He had started the car.

(41) John left the house and drove off to work. He had started the car with frozen fingers, but as he drove along the motorway his hands began to warm up.

Note that although we are treating the Information Status Constraint and the Contextual Relevance Constraint as two separate constraints, they interact closely with each other. Consider (42):

(42) John left the house, got into his car and drove off.

It is possible to mention the event of *John getting into his car* at its iconic place in the discourse because it will still constitute new information at this point, but also because at that point it can be contextualized consequentially by means of an event sentence. The problem with example (40), which introduces the inferred event without adding new information about it, lies in the fact that the event as such has assumed the status of old information, but also in the fact that unless new information about the event is added a relation with the neigbouring discourse is very hard to establish at this point, because the event in itself is contextually relevant only insofar as it is consequentially related to neighbouring events in the episodic structure it forms part of.

We pointed out at the beginning of this section that new information need not always be restricted to propositional information. In narrative, this is particularly relevant with respect to the point of view from which a situation is described. Consider the following example:

(43) 'We walked in the Park...'. She stopped. They had walked in the Park. (Banfield (1982): 103, from V. Woolf, *The Years*)

In terms of its propositional content, the event *walked in the Park* is repeated, without any new propositional information being added. When it is reasserted in the past perfect clause, however, it is being contemplated by the female third person protagonist: the sentence is in fact the surface realization of an underlying parenthetical (viz. **she thought**, or **she said to herself**), and it is the implied perspective on the event which is new. Examples involving this type of point of view refraction (which we discussed earlier) therefore do not invalidate the Information Status Constraint.

Let us recapitulate. We have shown how two general discourse constraints interact with the requirements imposed by the episodic structure of narrative to put restrictions on referring back to events which form part of the evolving episodic structure. This, we argued, is due to the fact that the construction of an episodic structure will involve inferring the occurrence of non-explicated events.

Finally, consider the following example:

(44) Jack took two dirty glasses from the table and filled them with brandy.
?He had rinsed them out, and the glasses glittered in the sunlight.

To incorporate the second event *(he) filled them with brandy* in the current episodic structure, we do not need to infer that Jack rinsed the glasses first. That means that the event referred to by means of the past perfect constitutes new information in this particular context. Because of the topical link with the next sentence, this information is also contextually relevant, so that both constraints have been met. Nevertheless the discourse sounds odd.

Intuitively, this seems to be due to the fact that there is a conflict between the consequential link established between the first two clauses and the information provided by the past perfect clause. To incorporate the information provided by the past perfect clause into the current episodic structure the reader must in effect acknowledge that her previous construction of the episodic structure was incorrect, undo it and build a new one, in which the event *(he) filled them with brandy* is consequentially related to the event of rinsing the glasses out. This kind of recovery procedure appears not to be allowed for in narrative. Once established, an episodic structure cannot be revised: two events entered as consequential cannot be separated at a later stage through the insertion of a third event.

We argue that a third constraint is at work here which, following Caenepeel and Sandström (1992), we refer to this as the *Monotonicity Constraint.* This constraint applies to what we have referred to earlier as past-in-the-pasts only, i.e. past perfects which assert that an event occurred prior to a contextually determined time. It stipulates that a past-in-the-past cannnot introduce for the first time an event which forms part of the current episodic structure. The constraint can be paraphrased as follows:

(III) The Monotonicity Constraint
An evolving episodic structure is only open at its right end. Two events entered as adjacent (and therefore as consequentially related) cannot be made non-adjacent through the later insertion of a third event.

Unlike the other two constraints outlined earlier, the Monotonicity Constraint is not a general discourse constraint: it is exclusive to episodic structures and, hence, to narrative discourse.

4.2.3 Referring Back outside the Current Episodic Structure

So far, we have looked at reference by means of a past perfect to events which (implicitly or explicitly) form part of the current episodic structure. Past perfects in narratives will, however, also frequently be used to refer to an event outside the evolving episodic structure. As we already pointed out, a novel or short story typically consists of a number of episodic structures, which will be separated by 'gaps' or periods of silence on the narrative time line. Such gaps may be marked linguistically (by an adverb such as **Two days later**, for instance) or graphically through page layout (eg chapter divisions will typically reflect closures and openings of episodic structures). A past perfect will often be used in narrative fiction to introduce a state of affairs that took place during a period not covered by the narrative, which becomes contextually relevant at the point in the text where it is mentioned. In such cases the past perfect sentence will always automatically meet the Information Status Constraint; and the past perfect will be felicitous if it can be made contextually relevant by means of a propositional/topical relation, as in the following example (where the discourse relation is Background):

(45) Later that afternoon, Charles and I were sitting on the porch. It had turned suddenly cold; the sky was brilliantly sunny but the wind was up. (Tartt, *The Secret History*)

Similarly, a past perfect will often be used to refer back to a state of affairs situated before the first episodic structure on the narrative time line:

(46) 'Can we take it out?' I said, intrigued. 'Of course. But we can't all go, we'll sink' I had never been in a boat in my life. (Tartt, *The Secret History*)

Finally, episodic structures may run in parallel, and a past perfect may be used to refer to a state of affairs that took place while the current episodic structure was being developed (i.e. while the reader was attending to something else). Thus in the following example, a game of croquet is being played while the first person protagonist and a friend of his are wrapped up in a conversation. The development of the conversation makes up the current episodic structure, until the attention of the protagonist is drawn to the game which is taking place within eyesight. The past perfect in the following passage describes what the protagonist sees, and derives its contextual relevance from this point of view refraction:

(47) 'No,'said Charles, his mouth full of ice. 'He has some nephews but he hates them. Look at this, would you,' he said suddenly, half rising from his chair. I looked. Across the lawn, Bunny had finally made his shot. (Tartt, *The Secret History*)

4.2.4 Summary

We have argued in this section that some important restrictions on the use of past perfect sentences in narrative arise from the interaction between the structure of narrative and a number of discourse constraints. We have outlined two general constraints, the Information Status Constraint and the Contextual Relevance Constraint, and a third one which is specific to narrative discourse, the Monotonicity Constraint. We have shown how the construction of episodic structures in narrative texts interacts with the Information Status Constraint, in that it involves inferring the occurrence of events that have not been asserted explicitly, and assigning them the status of given information. It also interacts with the Contextual Relevance Constraint, in that the contextual relevance of an event depends on whether it can be incorporated into the current episodic structure; and that of a state on how it coheres with this structure. Finally, we have demonstrated the effect of the Monotonicity Constraint, which states that once a consequentiality relation between two events has been established, it cannot be undone retrospectively by a past perfect.

On the basis of all this we can now explain the oddness of the discourse cited in (1) above, here repeated as (48):

(48) ?Ewan poured himself a cup of coffee. He had gone back into the house.

Although we have no information about the larger context of the discourse, and although it does not contain any explicit indications of the discourse type it belongs to, it will (for reasons set out elsewhere (cf. Caenepeel and Moens (1993)), be interpreted as part of a narrative. We claim that the discourse is odd because it is difficult to construct a context for it which meets all three of the constraints outlined above.

As part of a narrative, the discourse may be contextualized in one of two ways: it may either be the continuation of an existing episodic structure, or the start of a new one. Let us pursue the former possibility first. Example (49) places the discourse in (48) in the context of a current episodic structure:

(49) Ewan shoved all the dead branches on a heap, made a big bonfire and collected his garden gear. He went back into the house, poured himself a cup of coffee and settled down to read a magazine. ?He had gone back into the house.

The sentence **He had gone back into the house** contains no information other than the occurrence of the event itself. This means that for the Information Status Constraint to be met, the occurrence of the event must be new (i.e. it must not have been asserted in the current episodic structure, or be inferrable). Discourse (49) violates the Information Status Constraint, since the fact expressed by the past perfect sentence **He had gone back into the house** has already been asserted.

To avoid violating the Information Status Constraint, the information contained in the sentence **He had gone back into the house** should not be asserted in the current episodic structure and not be inferrable from it. This requirement is met in (50).

(50) Ewan shoved all the dead branches on a heap, made a big bonfire and collected his garden gear. He poured himself a cup of coffee and settled down to read a magazine. ?He had gone back into the house.

But now the Monotonicty Constraint is violated: the past perfect sentence **He had gone back into the house** undoes the consequentiality relation which has been established between two earlier events *[he] collected his garden gear* and *he poured himself a cup of coffee*) in the current episodic structure.

It follows from this that for all three constraints to be met, the past perfect sentence must *reintroduce* the event of Ewan going back into the house. Since the event cannot be inferred, it needs to be asserted at its iconic place within the current episodic structure. Discourse (51), in which all three constraints are met, constitutes the type of context in which (48) would be acceptable:

(51) Ewan shoved all the dead branches on a heap, made a big bonfire and collected his garden gear. He went back into the house, poured himself a cup of coffee and settled down to read a magazine. He had gone back into the house feeling tired, but now he was beginning to perk up.

The alternative possibility is for example (48) to be contextualized as the first sentence of a chapter. In this case the information contained in the sentence *He had gone back into the house* can be new without the Monotonicity Constraint being violated (since there will be no current episodic structure). However, on such an interpretation it remains difficult to create a context in which the Contextual Relevance Constraint can be met.

4.3 The Past Perfect in the News Reports

Throughout this deliverable, we have drawn attention to some crucial structural differences between the two text types in the corpus. We have seen that in the news reports the co-ordinates of the implied utterance event are not bracketed, as in the case of the narrative texts, so that the speech point provides a deictic centre for tense to revert to. As a result, no narrative time line is constructed, and events as well as states will function propositionally.

The most striking fact about the use of the past perfect constructions in the news reports is that they occur extremely rarely in comparison with the narrative corpus. This can be explained as a direct consequence of the deictic use of tense in the reports: if the primary function of tense lies in establishing a relationship between a state of affairs and its speech point, the temporal ordering of states of affairs with respect to each other, which constitutes the prime temporal function of the past perfect, becomes secondary and subject to less stringent constraints. In Caenepeel (1992) and Caenepeel and Moens (1993) it was already shown how the contrast between deicitic and non-deictic (or narrative) use of tense may affect the interpretation of consecutive simple past event sequences. In the non- narrative context of conversations, where the speech time is not bracketed, two simple past events can be interpreted in reverse order (if world knowledge allows for such an interpretation), and the past perfect will not normally be selected to express temporal precedence. In narrative contexts, on the other hand, the selection of the past perfect is essential for marking anterior time reference: the bracketing of the speech time in such texts imposes greater text-internal restrictions on temporal relations, and because of this two simple past event sentences cannot be interpreted in reverse order in such contexts.

In the case of the news reports, we have already pointed out that the availability of the speech point as source of temporal coherence results in the internal temporal structure of the reports being much looser than that narratives. This is reflected, for instance, in the frequent time and tense shifts that characterize the reports, and in the fact that the relationship between the temporal ordering of event sentences on the page and the meaning of the discourse is far less crucial than in the case of narrative. But it is also reflected in the use of tense: where in narrative the past perfect would be required to introduce a state of affairs which took place earlier than the last mentioned event in the discourse, the news reports will typically select a simple past. This is illustrated by the following examples:

(52) The American broadcasting networks in the Iraqi capital reported brilliant flashes of light, thunderous explosions and heavy anti-aircraft fire in the sky. The attack began [↔ had begun] about 3am on a moonless night. A aquadron of British Tornado ground attack aircraft also took off [↔ had taken off] from Bahrain just after 2 am local time (11 pm GMT). The war began roughly 19 hours after the United Nations deadline passed for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. [*The Daily Record* 17/1/91]

(53) Norman, of Washington, Tyne and Wear, was due to wed his girlfriend of seven years in June but had to postpone the day till September because of the Gulf crisis. His brother John, 29, said: "She is devastated. They were very close." The flier joined [↔ had joined] the RAF in 1986. [*The Sun*, 15/1/91]

(54) An eleventh-hour appeal was made by the secretary-general of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for Iraq to withdraw its troups from Kuwait (...) But earlier, as the UN stood deadlocked on proposals for possible peace initiatives from France and Britain, Iraq said [↔ had said] all efforts would be in vain. [*The Scotsman*, 16/1/91]

The use of the simple past, rather than the past perfect, in these news report extracts indicates that in each case the described event is in the first instance temporally related to the speech point and not to its immediate context.

Note that in all of the examples, the temporal location of the event is provided by a temporal adverbial. On the basis of this, it can be inferred that the event took place earlier than the event last mentioned in the discourse; but this constitutes a secondary inference which is not crucial for an adequate understanding of the discourse. Instances of anterior events introduced solely by means of a past perfect (i.e. where the past perfect constitutes the only marker of the temporal location of the event), which occurred frequently in the narrative corpus, were extremely rare in the news reports. This is in line with the temporal structure of the reports as we have described it here. As long as the speech point functions as deictic centre of the discourse, the past perfect serves no real function: in the absence of a narrative time line, the temporal ordering of states of affairs with respect to each other is not central to the purpose of the discourse. In other words, the absence of the past perfect corresponds to the speech time assuming the role of central point of evaluation for the discourse.

In some cases, however, the reporter may want to indicate precisely that this assumption no longer applies, i.e. that one or more states must be evaluated at a deictic centre *other than the speech point*. In such cases the past perfect will be used because it will serve a specific purpose. Recall what we said earlier about the fact that past perfects share with other states the characteristic that they require a point of evaluation for their interpretation, which may be activated as point of view centre. Depending on contextual considerations, this point of evaluation may be supplied either by the speech point or by an adverbial or discourse referent (i.e. an earlier event). We have also seen that the only point of evalation for simple past events (always in non-narrative contexts) is the speech point. It follows from this that if a reporter wants to convey that a third person is responsible for the views represented in the text, the selection of the past perfect, as opposed the simple past, will indicate that the state described in the sentence must be evaluated *not* at the speech point, but *at a contextually provided time.* If this point of evaluation is supplied by a third person speech event, a past perfect (as well as any other states in the same contexts) will introduce a perspectival refraction into the discourse. The following examples illustrate this:

(55) The prime minister (...) told MPs that from today all means of bring about the withdrawal, including force, were justified. A line had been drawn, not by any single country but by the United Nations. It was a just war.[*The Daily Telegraph*, 16/1/91]

(56) Mr Major told the Commons that Iraq showed no signs of planning a last- minute withdrawal. It had increased its forces in and around Kuwait to 600,000 men, more than 4,000 tanks and over 3,000 artillery pieces. Chemical weapons had also been deployed. [*The Independent*, 15/1/91]

The use of the past perfect thus serves a function in contexts where the journalist or reporter does not wish to commit herself to the views represented; the fact that a past perfect sentence can be evaluated at a contextually provided time rather than at the speech time makes it possible to *distance* the content of the sentence from the speech point, something which is not allowed for by the use of a simple past sentence. If the past perfect sentences in examples (55) and (56) are replaced with simple pasts, the perspectival refraction disappears and, with the reverting of tense to the speech point, the deictic centre of the discourse (and, correspondingly, responsibility for its semantic content) will also shift back to the speech point (and the reporter's stance).

Since they are general discourse constraints, both the Information Status Constraint and the Contextual Relevance Constraint will apply to past perfect sentences in the news reports. But their effect is more straightforward than in the case of narratives. In the absence of consequential relations between events, event inferencing will not affect the Information Status Constraint. Similarly, the distinction between backwards reference to events forming part of the current episodic structure and events which must be placed in 'gaps and silences' on the timeline, or in parallel episodic structures, also becomes irrelevant, since the processing of the news reports involves the construction neither of episodic structures nor of a time line. The contextual relevance of past perfects in the reports ties in with its main function which, as we have seen, lies in shifting the point of evaluation away from the speech point: in such cases the Contextual Relevance Constraint will automatically be met because of the perspectival refraction.

5 Conclusions

We have shown in this paper that there is a clear relationship between the functioning of aspectual constructions at the discourse level and the structure of the discourse in which such constructions occur. We outlined the characteristics of two text types, viz. narrative fiction and news reports, in terms of their tenor, field and mode. In doing so we drew particular attention to the difference in the relationship between both types of text and their speech point, and the repercussions of this for the structure of the discourse. On the basis of this we compared the functioning of events and states in both text types, showing how the way they are contextualized ties in with the structure of each type. And finally, we demonstrated how the use of past perfect sentences in both text types is subject to the way in which general discourse principles interact with the discourse properties of each text type in which the past perfect occurs.

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