

A description of the French Passive
for non-native speakers

by

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Summary

Even major features of a language are often inadequately described and this is especially true of descriptions intended for the non-native speaker.

This study aims to remedy this situation in respect of the feature of voice and particularly in respect of the passive in French.

Chapter 1 reviews existing general treatments of the passive and concludes with an outline of the areas to be covered in Chapters 2 and 3 together with a discussion of the methodology to be adopted.

In Chapter 2 the passive is defined by contrast with the active voice and the concept of voice neutrality is introduced. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of the three types of passive sentence which have been postulated together with an examination of a number of related problems. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the distribution of the three types of passive.

Chapter 3 deals with the factors determining the selection of the passive.

Index terms: French language
Syntax
Linguistics
Passive Voice

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10	19	In paragraph 611 Grevisse makes some 'observations sur le passif'. These deal with transitivity and the passive (see page 26 of this study). They also contain useful comments on individual verbs.
18	12	Delete <u>is usually inanimate</u> . Add ' <u>désigne des choses, parfois aussi des personnes</u> ' (Grevisse: 1964:541)
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Foreword

The learner of French as a foreign language has at his disposal an enormous range of course books and grammars and yet it is often difficult to gain an overall understanding of even the most important features of the language. This study is an attempt to provide such an understanding for the verbal category of voice and more especially for the passive.

The study begins with a critical description of some established grammars of French followed by an outline of the methodology to be employed (Ch.1).

The model of transformational-generative grammar has been rejected on two grounds, one theoretical and one practical. Firstly it would be inconsistent with our treatment of the factors governing the selection of the passive (Chapter 3) since these are judged to be largely contextual and to operate at surface level. Secondly its formulations are so abstract that the student attempting to learn French by studying such a grammar would come into contact with too little French as it is written and spoken. A well-constructed T.-G. grammar of French would probably be of most value to the native speaker, who is interested in understanding the functioning of his language rather than in learning it.

Structuralist grammar, starting as it does from a corpus of "everyday" French provides a more hopeful model (Ch.1 (ii) p. 34), and here we would like to acknowledge a debt to Jean Dubois whose technique of surface transformations we have adopted. Nevertheless it has proved necessary to reject the pure formalism of Dubois since it inevitably sets to one side the semantic plane with which the foreign learner is bound to be concerned. The need for a semantic perspective

is particularly well illustrated by the treatment of the agentive complement (Chapter 2 B(ii))

The hope, then, is that the study reconciles to the maximum possible degree methodological consistency in the field of linguistics with the requirements of the learner of French as a foreign language and so provides him with a satisfactory description of the passive.

Chapter 1

A review of the treatment of the passive in established grammars of French.

- Contents A. A critical description of two representative grammars designed for English learners of French (p.3-8).
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A. Grammars designed for English learners of French.

The phenomenon of voice is an important one. Galichet points out that it is one of the four verbal categories which allow a process to take its place in "le monde des phénomènes", the others being aspect, mood and tense (Galichet:1971:90). It is all the more surprising, then, to find the active/passive contrast dealt with in such cursory fashion in grammar books and course books designed for the learner of French as a foreign language. "Heath's New Practical French Grammar", for example, devotes one and a half pages to the topic and this includes the table of the passive conjugation (Fraser and Squair:1922:208o-208p). "Nelson's French Grammar" deals with the topic in about the same space (Ritchie: 1936 [reprinted 1956]: 187-189) while even the recent "Grammaire pratique du français d'aujourd'hui" only extends the treatment to three pages. (Mauger:1968: 288-290).

Ritchie makes the following points:

- (1) "Voice" is the form of a verb by which the relation of the subject to the action is indicated". The terms active and passive, we note, are defined by reference to the Latin verbs "agere, actum" and "pati, pass-us".
- (2) An active sentence is distinguished by the fact that the subject is the agent.
- (3) The passive is "comparatively little used", although it is useful in order to omit reference to the agent.
- (4) Generally the French prefers the active construction with "on" or the "reflexive voice".

- (5) The passive is composed of compound forms made up of "être" + past participle of the appropriate verb.
- (6) With very few exceptions the passive is limited to transitive verbs (Points 1-6 see Ritchie:1936:187-189).
- (7) The reflexive verb may have the value of the passive when the subject is inanimate. This is accounted for by the "vivacious nature of French" (Ritchie: 1936:191).

This treatment of the passive illustrates some of Roulet's criticisms of the "traditional" French grammar (Roulet:1975:5-17).

- a) It is brief although it deals with an important construction.
- b) Its definitions are inadequate.
- c) Its presentation is compartmentalised.
- d) It tends to use Greek and Latin categories.
- e) It does not reveal the systematic aspect of language.

There is, for example, no definition of the term "subject." Indeed elsewhere Ritchie distinguishes between "grammatical subject" and "real subject" (Ritchie:1936:117-118). What then, is the relationship between "real subject" and the "agent"? The subject is the agent, according to Ritchie in such sentences as: cet enfant est sage....il paraît intelligent (Ritchie:1936:118). What is the meaning of "agent" in such contexts?

Criticism (c) can be illustrated by the fact that the

agentive complement is not dealt with in the treatment of the passive but appears, in one example only, in the section dealing with prepositions where there is no reference to the passive at all (Ritchie:1936:307).

As an illustration of (e) we may point out that the account of the factors leading to the selection of the passive is quite inadequate and that the one factor mentioned, the desire to omit reference to the agent, is even more a feature of the reflexive verbs used with a passive value.

Mauger's treatment of the passive is a little more extensive and includes the following points:

1. "Voix active: Pierre conduira la voiture
Voix passive: La voiture sera conduite par Pierre..."
2. The form of the passive is "être"+ past participle, but "être" may be replaced by "rester, demeurer, sembler, paraître, passer pour" but not by "devenir".
3. In principle only transitive verbs can be put into the passive.
4. Some intransitive verbs can have a passive introduced by the impersonal "il":
Il fut remédié à cet inconvénient.
5. A distinction must be made between "le passif d'action" and "le passif de résultat". Only the former may have an agentive complement or a complement of the type "en combien de temps?".
6. Generally speaking French prefers the active form or the pronominal form to the passive which sometimes seems "lourd ou gauche".
7. "Par" usually introduces the agentive complement. In this case "Par" introduit un agent, un être actif à proprement parler".

"De" appears after (i) verbs of feeling or "intelligence".

after (ii) verbs of accompaniment when the situation is stressed rather than "une action intentionnelle".

(iii) frequently when the agent is an idea, an abstraction.

(iv) when the participles have a "valeur d'adjectifs".

(Points 1-7 see Mauger:1968:288-290)

8. "En principe, tout verbe transitif direct peut, à la forme pronominale, prendre le sens d'un passif"

(Mauger:1968:291)

9. In "le français parlé familier" the active form of a transitive verb with no object may take a passive meaning:

cette étoffe ne lave pas....

His explanation is an essentially diachronic one:

Il s'agit sans doute de formes pronominales qui pour des raisons d'abrègement (principe d'économie) ont perdu leur pronom réfléchi (Mauger:1968:292).

We note from (1) that Mauger gives no definition of active or passive whether semantic or formal but relies on the reader's intuitive grasp of the relationship between the two sentences he provides.

The important topic dealt with in point 5 is inadequately covered and the comment is misleading in some respects. The claim that only "le passif d'action" can have an agentive complement or a complement of the type "en combien de temps?" is clearly false since a sentence such as:

il sera élu en dix jours, is ambiguous being equivalent either to:

on l'élira en dix jours.

or to:

on l' aura élu en dix jours.

Secondly Mauger does not point out that the "passif de résultat" only applies to verbs which have perfective meaning. Sentences such as:

il est aimé, il est observé etc.

are always "passifs d'action" irrespective of the presence or absence of an agent.

Thirdly it would be desirable if it were possible to find the principle which links the agentive complement and certain expressions of time so that the underlying mechanism could be exposed.

A similar comment applies to the disparate criteria set up to account for the selection of "de" and "par". Some of these relate to the nature of the verb and some to the nature of the agentive complement.

Mauger does not really deal with the reasons for the selection of the passive. His comment, that the passive often seems "lourd ou gauche" is of no value without an outline of the circumstances, the linguistic environments, which condition this sense of appropriateness or inappropriateness.

Point 9 is an interesting one, included by Mauger because his grammar deals with spoken French as well as with the written mode. However, he does not point out that synchronically such sentences are part of the system that includes:

la branche casse, le discours commence etc, where the meaning is passive but where the verb may or may not have a pronominal form. In this instance Mauger fails to "reveal the systematic aspect of language".

The two grammars whose treatment of the passive has just been briefly considered are fairly representative of the old and new generations of grammars intended for the English learner. In the search for a more adequate treatment of the topic it seems natural to turn next to some of the "source" grammars intended for the native speaker.

B. Grammars designed for native speakers of French.

(i) The definition of the passive.

In studying the various treatments of the passive one is struck by the diversity of criteria which can be used to define it. They tend to fall, however, into two main types: the semantic-morphological, which we associate with "traditional" grammar, and the formal, which we associate with structuralist grammar. The third type, transformational - generative grammar, is distinguished from other forms of grammar more by the precise way in which it tries to trace how a sentence is generated than by the novelty of its definitions. The recognition of the passive in T.-G. grammar is fundamentally similar to the method used in structuralist grammars: either a characteristic form of the verb phrase is considered as the criterion, or the problem is resolved by relating the passive sentence formally to an active counterpart.

Because the definition of the passive determines, to a large extent, the subsequent matter to be treated it seems essential to examine a number of existing definitions in some detail.

Le Bon Usage.

The initial definition given by Grevisse is as follows:

Les voix sont les formes que prend le verbe pour exprimer le rôle du sujet dans l'action.

Il y a deux voix du verbe:

1^o La voix active (on dit aussi l'actif),
indiquant que le sujet fait l'action:

Le maître parle; l'élève écoute.

2^o La voix passive (on dit aussi le passif)
indiquant que le sujet subit l'action: L'élève est instruit par le maître, - Aucun juge par

vous ne sera visité? (Mol.) (Grevisse:1964:547).

This definition, like that of Ritchie (Ritchie:1936:187-8), suggests that it is the role of the subject in the action which determines whether the form of the verb is active or passive. We would conclude from this that sentences such as:

Jean reçoit le coup en pleine figure,
or L'armée a subi une attaque

are passive. This is an arguable case if one wants a semantic definition of the passive but Grevisse certainly does not intend this conclusion to be drawn since the rest of his treatment of the passive is clearly based on the unstated assumption that the passive form is limited to "être" + past participle.

Like Ritchie, Grevisse confuses two linguistic levels, the grammatical and the semantic. It is not unfair to suggest that more can be learnt about the passive by looking at the examples he gives than can be learnt from the definition itself.

When confronted with the problem of how to distinguish verbs whose compound tenses use "être" from passive forms Grevisse uses a surface transformation technique which might have been useful in his definition proper:

une forme passive , par ex." Il est admiré" peut
être tournée par "On l'admire" tandis qu'une forme
active conjuguée avec "être"... ne se prête pas à
ce changement de tournure (Grevisse:1964:547-8).

We have here, in embryo, a structural definition of the passive.

the passive having no distinctive form but being composed of the forms of "être" combined with the past participle of the appropriate verb. The criterion used to define the passive, however, is a structuralist one:

Lorsqu' une phrase est construite avec un verbe admettant un objet direct:

- (a) Le chien de garde a mordu un enfant, il est possible de changer l'ordre des mots de la phrase (à condition de modifier la forme verbale) sans que l'idée exprimée varie:
- (b) Un enfant a été mordu par le chien de garde (Chevalier et al: 1964:322).

The most important features of this definition are:

- (1) The restriction of the passive transformation to sentences constructed with a transitive verb, ruling out sentences such as "il est tombé" from being considered as passive.
- (2) A lack of information about how the verb is to be modified.
- (3) A lack of information about how the agentive complement is to be formed.

Grammaire structurale du français - Le verbe.

In this thoroughgoing structural grammar Dubois treats the passive quite extensively. He starts from the basic active sentence, the "phrase minimale noyau de type achevé":

$$[P_1] = [(SN_1) + ([V] + [SN_2])] \quad (\text{Dubois:1967:80}).$$

He then relies on a passive transformation, or, to be more accurate, transposition, with modifications of surface structure elements:

On appelle transformation passive de l'énoncé minimal l'application à ce dernier d'une règle de transformation passive telle que, le signifié étant invariant, le rôle respectif et l'ordre des deux syntagmes nominaux soient inversés.

La phrase théorique (P_1) alors obtenue, est la suivante:

$$[P'_1] = [(SN_2) + ([V'] + [d] + [SN_1])]$$

.... il s'ajoute dans le cas du passif un démarcatif "d".....Ceci signifie que la fonction d'agent sera définie à la fois par la position et par un démarcatif (ou préposition) spécifique (Dubois: 1967:81).

At least two semantic elements are included in this transformation: the terms "le rôle respectif" and "la fonction d'agent". It has become clear from the examination of these grammars that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to avoid reference to the relationship between the subject/object contrast at a grammatical level and the agent/"recipient" contrast at a semantic level. It is important, however, to keep the two linguistic planes separate as do the Le Bidois, the Larousse grammar and Dubois.

The novelty of Dubois' definition of the passive lies in the fact that, although it is structural in type, being based on a transformation of surface structure, it avoids limiting the passive to the one verb form, "être" + past participle:

la transformation passive peut s'écrire de plusieurs manières (Dubois:1967:82).

By broadening the definition of the agentive complement

to include not only "de" and "par" but "sous l'action de", "sous" etc., Dubois is able to postulate four types of passive sentence: three morphosyntactic variations of the Active \rightarrow Passive transformation and one Passive \rightarrow Active transformation. These forms may be summarised as follows:
Active \rightarrow Passive Types:

(a) $\hat{\text{être}} + \text{p.p.}$ (P_1) = (Le soleil jaunit les papiers)

- Active.

(P'_1) = (Les papiers sont jaunis par le soleil)

- Passive.

(b) "Verbes symétriques" (P_1) = (Le soleil jaunit les papiers) - Active

(P'_1) = (Les papiers jaunissent au soleil) - Passive

(c) pronominal verb (P_1) = (L'humidité gâte les fruits)

- Active

(P'_1) = (Les fruits se gâtent à l'humidité) - Passive

Passive \rightarrow Active Type:

(P_1) = (Pierre tomba sous le choc) - Passive

(P'_1) = (Le choc fit tomber Pierre) - Active

This transformation applies to all fundamentally intransitive verbs: Jean sort, la chaise bascule, les trains sont arrivés etc (see Ch.1, B(v)).

One advantage of this definition of the passive is that the grammatical passive now covers almost all of the area of semantic passive. Indeed in the case of the passive \rightarrow active transformation, it exceeds the bounds of what is normally felt to be the "semantic" passive.

This type of passive is anomalous in a second respect. The transformation is performed in the passive \rightarrow active direction suggesting that in this case Dubois regards the active

sentence as the more complex, or marked, form.

Thirdly, there is a clear and systematic difference in distribution between the compound forms of the "venir, aller arriver ..." group of intransitive verbs and that of the "être" + past participle forms of transitive verbs. "Il est venu" is perfective in aspect, and usually past in reference, although it may have present reference. In these respects it is paralleled by "il a mangé" rather than by "il est mangé" which may be perfective or imperfective (see Chapter 2 B(i)) but which has only present reference.

Fourthly there is no sense of underlying agent in most of the sentences using these verbs e.g. "le train part".

Fifthly it is difficult to accept that the "faire" + infinitive construction is simply the form taken by an active transformation and does not change the "signifié" of the sentence. We note that this transformation may be applied not only to sentences classified by Dubois as passive but, in identical fashion, to active sentences. Contrast:

Paul mange - Active

Jean le fait manger - Active

Paul tombe - Passive

Jean le fait tomber - Active

Why then should Dubois wish to consider sentences such as "il arrive, il est venu, il tombe" as passive? The answer lies firstly in his overriding concern for formal unity. Since he considers other verbs such as "jaunir, plier" as passive when used intransitively on the grounds that they have active counterpart sentences in which the order of the noun phrases is reversed relative to the verb phrase, by extension he considers this group of verbs also to be passive,

because they are intransitive. However, because his definition of the passive requires an active counterpart sentence and because this group of verbs cannot be used transitively, he resorts to the expedient of setting up "faire" + infinitive as the appropriate active transformation.

Secondly, because of his preoccupation with form, Dubois wishes to categorise all verb phrases composed of "être" + past participle as passive. A large group of intransitive verbs form their compound tenses with "être" rather than "avoir" thus providing Dubois with an additional reason for considering them to be essentially passive in both their simple and compound forms.

This same consideration leads Dubois to categorise all pronominal verb forms as passive. Describing a form of sentence in which "le syntagme objet est identique au syntagme sujet" he states that:

la transformation passive, où le pronom me, te, se nous, vous, est inséré entre le syntagme sujet et le verbe, est appelée "forme pronominale réfléchie" (Dubois:1967:117).

As an example he gives a sentence which most grammarians would certainly consider to be active:

Elle s' accoutre d'une manière ridicule (Dubois:1967:117).

In this respect also, Dubois oversteps the limits of the "semantic" passive.

(ii) Polymorphism - the "semantic" passive.

We have seen that all the grammarians examined, with the exception of Dubois, accept that the grammatical passive as they have defined it does not exhaust the "semantic" passive. They therefore discuss grammatical forms which are not passive

according to their definition especially since at some stage they limit the passive to "être" + past participle, but which have, nevertheless, "la valeur d'un passif".

(1) Miscellaneous forms

Wagner and Pinchon give examples of the use of "se voir" and "se faire" in passive sentences of a rather special sort:

se voir. Actif: On lui a retiré son permis de conduire,

Passif: Son permis de conduire lui a été retiré,

Substitut: Il s'est vu retirer son permis de conduire.

The authors point out that this "substitute" form allows the indirect object to become the subject of the passive sentence.

se faire. Actif: Un rôdeur l'a tué.

Passif: Il a été tué par un rôdeur.

Substitut: Il s'est fait tuer par un rôdeur.

(Wagner et Pinchon:1962
:280).

In this case the "substitute" form allows a passive value to be combined with the expression of the agent in the context of a pronominal verb, a combination which, in most cases, is not possible.

(2) The pronominal verb form.

The most frequent way in which a sentence may be given "la valeur d'un passif" without having recourse to the "passive conjugation" is, of course, the pronominal form. This fact is mentioned by Grevisse, Le Bidois, Wagner and Pinchon, and, in a different form of analysis, by Dubois. The Larousse grammar makes no mention of the passive in its short treatment of pronominal verbs.

Le Bon Usage.

Grevisse's treatment of the pronominal form in the context of the passive is very disappointing. He states for example:

Les verbes pronominaux ne peuvent s'employer au passif: Il se vante, Il se lève. Se moquer fait exception....on dit fort correctement "être moqué, se faire moquer" (Grevisse:1964:550).

Such examples are by no means exceptional. One can easily find sentences such as "Jean est habillé, levé, lavé, agenouillé etc".

Apart from this statement Grevisse confines himself to the comment that the pronominal form may translate the passive idea (Grevisse: 1964:551). Later he adds that when it is used to express the passive the pronominal form is almost always in the third person and the subject is usually inanimate. He claims that the pronominal form is "toujours sans indication d'agent" (Grevisse:1964:541). It is true that subjects are usually inanimate, since an animate subject tends to lead to ambiguity in interpretation. An exception to this generalisation is the sentence:

il se reconnaît à ses vêtements

which has a passive interpretation despite the animate subject. The second statement is not quite true since pronominal verb constructions do occasionally have expressed agentive complements:

Une réforme s'impose et se fera par les historiens (Mornet:1934:248).

Finally he mentions the frequent use of passive impersonal constructions:

Il se brûle par an dans la cathédrale mille livres de cire (Th.Gauthier, Voyage en Esp.p.329)
(Grevisse:1964:542).

Syntaxe du français moderne

The only point made by the Le Bidois in respect of the passive use of pronominal verbs which is not included in the Grevisse analysis is the suggestion that the pronominal form may be able to give a passive "coloration" where the "passive conjugation" cannot be used:

elle baisse les yeux, les nègres portent
volontiers du blanc (Le Bidois:1967:408).

They also rely on the similarity of meaning between the sentences:

Cette maison a été construite en un an.

Cette maison s'est construite en un an.

in order to show that the pronominal form has a passive use. This method has its disadvantages (see Chapter 2 C(i) p.75) but it does hint that the relative functions of the "être"+ past participle passive and the pronominal verb form might be profitably explored.

Grammaire française classique et moderne.

Wagner and Pinchon make some useful comparisons which do indeed throw some light on the relationships just alluded to.

They claim:

On dit indifféremment: « ce médicament doit être pris à jeun le matin » et « Ce médicament doit se prendre à jeun le matin » « Le noir était très porté cet hiver » et « Le noir se portait beaucoup cet hiver » . « Cette pièce est jouée partout » et « Cette piece se joue partout » (Wagner et Pinchon:1962:235),

They also point out, quite correctly, the relationship between these sentences and active sentences introduced by "on".

They go on to write that the pronominal form and the

"être" + past participle form are interchangeable when the sentences are imperfective. This comment about aspect is, however, so carelessly formulated that it is little more than the hint of a useful observation. Firstly they talk about "le caractère imperfectif des verbes employés" when it is quite clear in the first example, that it is not the verb itself which is imperfective ("prendre" is a perfective verb), but the iterative expression "le matin" which makes the verb phrase as a whole imperfective. Secondly they claim that a pronominal form cannot be used in place of a passive when the latter "évoque un état accompli". However, this is clearly possible in tenses other than the present:

Cette maison s'est construite en un an.

Cette maison a été construite en un an.

In this instance Wagner and Pinchon are confusing the state/action contrast with that of "accompli"/"non accompli". This topic will clearly repay further study (see Chapter 2, B(i) and E).

Grammaire structurale du français - Le Verbe

Whereas Wagner and Pinchon begin by claiming that the two forms of passive are often interchangeable without alteration of meaning, Dubois claims quite the opposite:

La forme pronominale joue le rôle d'un non-accomplis en regard de la transformation passive avec être et le participe, qui joue le rôle d'un accompli (Dubois:1967:115).

He gives some convincing examples:

Le sable est aggloméré/Le sable s'agglomère.

Le route est affaissée/La route s'affaisse (Dubois: 1967:115).

As with Wagner and Pinchon we must assume, though he does not say so, that he has the present tense in mind. Dubois' formalism leads him to claim that the "être"+ past participle passive always expresses "aspect accompli" but this is not true even of some of his own examples:

On est affairé autour du blessé, il est ad onné à
l'étude de l'anglais.

Of course it is open to Dubois to claim that he is defining "accompli" and "non accompli" purely formally but in that case he loses the distinction between sentences of the type:

le feu est allumé → on a allumé le feu
and
l'homme est aimé → on aime l'homme.

(iii) Polyvalence of forms used for the passive.

Just as the grammars we have studied recognise that the semantic passive is polymorphous at a grammatical level, so it is recognised, to some extent at least that the forms of the passive are polyvalent.

Le Bon Usage.

We have already seen that Grevisse uses a technique of surface transformation to distinguish a form such as "il est venu" from "il est battu"(see Chapter 1.B(i)p.10). He is also concerned to point out that the past participle is often "un simple adjectif attribut" and not "une action subie par le sujet"(Grevisse:1964 547). As an example he gives, "La rue était obstruée". He offers no means of distinguishing between the past participle as a "forme verbale" and the same word as a "simple adjectif attribut". Indeed one could easily argue that the given example could be transformed into an active sentence:

Les voitures avaient obstrué la rue.

Such a transformation would be impossible in the case of a "simple adjectif attribut" as in the sentence "la rue était pleine"

Syntaxe du français moderne

The Le Bidois offer a different analysis of the same phenomenon. They claim that a sentence such as "la porte est ouverte" or "le déjeuner est servi" are sentences "non d'action mais d'état". They go on to say that if the sentences are expanded as follows:

La porte est ouverte à six heures.

Le déjeuner est servi à midi.

La nature foncièrement passive de la phrase se manifeste avec évidence..... Ce sont là d'incontestables phrases d'action (Le Bidois:1967:411).

The implication that only "phrases d'action" are really passive obviously needs further examination.

Grammaire française classique et moderne.

Wagner and Pinchon try to combine the two positions by claiming firstly that:

En l'absence d'un complément le passif des verbes qui ont un caractère nettement perfectif décrit l'état qui succède à un procès achevé.

They claim secondly that such passive sentences:

ne diffèrent pas, au fond, de celles où un adjectif quelconque détermine un sujet en fonction d'attribut (Wagner et Pinchon:1962:278).

These two positions are reconciled by describing the latter as one of the "valeurs descriptives du passif".

(iv) The agentive complement

In none of the "traditional" grammars studied does the agentive complement play a crucial role in the definition of the passive; the criterion being, rather, the semantic role played by the subject of the sentence. Indeed in the case of Grevisse the agentive complement is dealt with in paragraph 205 whereas we must wait until paragraph 610-611

for his treatment of the passive. In paragraph 205 he tells us that "de" is used instead of "par" in the following circumstances:

1^o... surtout quand le sens propre du verbe s'est affaibli et qu'on exprime, plutôt que l'action même l'état résultant de l'action subie.....

2^o..."De" s'emploie souvent avec les verbes pris au figuré.

3^o "De" s'emploie souvent avec les verbes marquant un sentiment, une émotion de l'âme.

4^o "De" est souvent employé devant un complément non accompagné d'un déterminatif (Grevisse:1964:147)

"Par" is used for verbs in which the full meaning is expressed, where verbs are used literally, where verbs indicate "une opération matérielle" and where the complement is preceded by a determiner.

In her excellent article on the agentive complement Sylvia Straub criticises the fourth point on the grounds that Grevisse is mistaking the effect for the cause. It is the presence of "de" which accounts for the absence of determiner and not vice versa. She also shows the inadequacy of point 2 by producing the following examples:

Le scandale est étouffé par la famille.

Le musicien est aveuglé par sa passion.

(Straub:1974:587).

However it is scarcely necessary to seek out flaws in Grevisse's argument since he himself accompanies all his suggestions with "surtout" or "souvent".

Grammaire française classique et moderne

Wagner and Pinchon deal with the topic in a most cursory

fashion. After writing that "par" is the normal preposition in the agentive complement they claim that "de" is used in some cases where "il s'est fixé par tradition: Etre aimé (respecté) de tous". Otherwise it is used "surtout en poésie et quand "par" phonétiquement serait d'un effet disgracieux" (Wagner et Pinchon:1962:282). This comment is clearly too vague to be of much help. There is contained within it, however, an element of truth since in cases where genuine choice between 'de' and 'par' exists, where the meaning of the sentence is not affected, "de" appears to be the stylistically marked form. It is chosen for use in formal situations. This tendency may reflect indirectly the frequency with which "de" was used in the seventeenth century when "par" was the marked form stylistically. There is no doubt, however, that Wagner and Pinchon fail to go to the heart of the problem. *Syntaxe du français moderne.*

The Le Bidois tell us that "de" is used:

lorsqu' il s' agit, non de relater une action
mais de décrire ou constater un état, un phéno-
mène considéré dans sa durée (Le Bidois:1967:706-707).

Taken alone this does not seem a very reliable criterion since it is quite possible to find sentences such as:

Jean est aimé de/par ses parents.

Le professeur est respecté de/par ses élèves.

L'homme est suivi de/par un chien

Grammaire structurale du français - Le verbe.

Dubois' definition of the passive involves him in accepting all sorts of prepositions and prepositional expressions including à, de, par, sous, sous l'action de, sous l'effet de, avec. He makes no general attempt to define the conditions

in which each of these is used in the context of the agentive complement but he does comment on the uses of "de" and "par". He claims that "par" is used more frequently and that the use of "de" is limited to verbs where the passive transformation is frequent. This applies especially to verbs where the subject and object are both animate:

Ses parents l'aiment → Il est aimé de ses parents
(Dubois:1967:106).

"De" also appears before inanimate nouns but only when the verb "implique une transformation passive très fréquente (sujet pluriel/objet singulier à l'actif):

Un hors-d'oeuvre et un plat de viande composent le menu → Le menu est composé d'un hors-d'oeuvre et d'un plat de viande, ou (sujet non-animé/objet animé de l'actif):

Les soucis l'accablent → Il est accablé de soucis"
(Dubois: 1967:107).

These categories have the merit of being consistent with Dubois' observations about the nature of the subject in active and passive sentences (Dubois:1967:91-97). There may be some validity in them but they are clearly too restrictive since it is possible to compose a sentence such as:

Le livre est suivi d'un appendice
which is not covered by the rules.

Finally Dubois claims that it is always possible to replace "de" by "par" which is certainly not the case, as his own examples illustrate (Dubois:1967:107).

(v) Transitivity and the passive.

Within what is conventionally considered the active voice we can distinguish three basic constructions into which verbs may enter. They may be expressed as follows:

(1) NP₁ + V + NP₂
il mange une pomme

(2) NP₁ + V + d + NP₂
le gel nuit aux fruits
where "d" is a preposition without semantic content.

(3) NP₁ + V
Il arrive

Some grammarians consider (1) to be transitive and (2) and (3) to be intransitive.

(see, for example, Wagner et Pinchon:1962:270).

Other grammarians consider (1) and (2) to be transitive, distinguishing between - "transitif direct" (1) and "transitif indirect" (2) while reserving the intransitive category for (3). This is Grevisse's position (see Grevisse:1964:524-525).

For the purpose of this study we shall adopt Grevisse's analysis.

All the grammars studied relate the "être" + past participle passive form to the feature of transitivity. Grevisse states:

En principe on peut mettre au passif tout verbe transitif direct....

He adds, however, a number of exceptions:

La Meuse prend sa source en France.

Nous avons un verger.

Il peut tout sur les peuples (Grevisse:1964:548).

The Le Bidois also give a number of exceptions:

Il lève la tête, elle détourne les yeux, mon ami a perdu sa mère, je veux votre bonheur (Le Bidois:1967:407),

and attempt to account for them in terms of markedness. The argument can be summarised as follows: there must be a reason for not using the active voice. Such a reason, is always lacking in the case of the sentences quoted above.

By careful choice of words Dubois avoids the problem of exceptions when he writes that the passive transformation with "être" + past participle "intéresse l'ensemble des verbes transitifs..." (Dubois:1967:104). He quotes no exceptions but it is possible to surmise that he might explain such exceptions in terms of markedness since he develops this concept at some length.

(vi) The selection of the passive.

(1) The passive as a marked form.

All the grammars studied claim explicitly, or suggest implicitly, that the same message may be conveyed either by an active or by a passive sentence.

Grevisse makes no mention of the relative frequency of the two voices. The reader might assume them to be equally frequent and that the choice between them was purely arbitrary or dictated by considerations of style.

It is surprising to find that the Larousse grammar, despite its more structural approach, is as silent on this topic as is Grevisse.

All the other grammars examined in detail suggest that the passive, though common, occurs less frequently than the active voice.

The Le Bidois use the "mentalistic" approach to explain this phenomenon:

la tendance du français est de réserver
la voix passive... au cas spécial où c'est
le sujet du verbe qui s' impose à la pensée
comme subissant l'action.....

Such cases are not the rule because they are contrary to "l'instinct de l'esprit français" (Le Bidois:1967:407).

Wagner and Pinchon deal briefly but effectively with the topic when they write that the passive is a marked form only selected for use for a specific reason. The active voice on the other hand is unmarked, which accounts for the fact that sentences which are active in form may actually be passive in meaning:

Pierre reçut une gifle (Wagner et Pinchon:1962:272).

Although Dubois does not actually use the term 'marked' in his discussion of the passive he points out that the passive sentence is "plus coûteuse" than an active sentence since it involves the speaker and listener in extra transformations (Dubois:1967:86).

(2) "Uses" of the passive.

Both Wagner and Pinchon and Dubois seek to explain the factors leading to the choice of the passive and Dubois tries, in addition, to establish criteria for judging the degree of acceptability of any given passive sentence. The explanations offered by Wagner and Pinchon prove on the whole much less satisfactory than those suggested by Dubois. Further discussion of these substantial contributions will be deferred to Chapter 3.

Neither Grevisse nor the Larousse grammar make any mention of this topic, nor is there anything specific in the Le Bidois grammar. Galichet, however, makes two suggestions: the passive is chosen to emphasise "le résultat de l'action, l'aspect subi". Thus he contrasts the sentence:

L'arbre a été déraciné,

with:

La tempête déracinait les arbres.

The distinction here seems to be one of aspect rather than of voice. His second point is worthy of further study especially as it is a factor commonly noted by grammarians. He claims that the passive is used:

pour mettre en relief l'objet, par l'élimination de l'agent....(Galichet:1971:105).

This point will be taken up again in Chapter 3.

C. Discussion of the methodology to be adopted and the linguistic areas to be examined in Chapter 2 and 3.

(i) Introductory remarks

Study of a number of grammars of French has revealed, in some cases, confusion in the methodology employed and cursory treatment or no treatment at all of many of the most important features of the passive. It is necessary at this point to establish which aspects of the passive should be dealt with in the body of this study and what methodology should inform them.

First of all, however, we must establish the frame of reference in which these choices are to be made. It seems that some of the choices, especially those concerned with basic methodology, should depend on whether this study of the passive is directed to the native French speaker or to the learner of French as a second language. In the first case intuitive knowledge of the semantic and grammatical structures of French can be assumed. In the second case it can not. It is for the second group that the study is intended.

(ii) Methodology.

The first choice in this sphere lies between semantic and formal definitions of the passive and, more generally, between a semantic and formal underlying model.

We have seen that none of the grammars was able totally to exclude semantic elements, although these could probably be limited to the recognition that sentence X and sentence Y have the same "signifié", the sentences being otherwise defined formally. We have seen that Dubois almost reaches this stage and that his formal definition of the passive includes several types of sentences which, by any semantic

criterion, would not be considered passive. The argument in favour of such a position is that the semantic and grammatical planes, although related in some way which enables us to express our thoughts, are not isomorphic and can be studied as separate systems, leaving the problem of relating them to a later stage. The lack of isomorphism means that the "semantic" passive is polymorphous, the passive "idea" being realised through various grammatical forms: "être" + p.p., the pronominal verb, se voir + infin. etc. Conversely the "grammatical" passive as defined for example by Dubois is polyvalent, the passive form falling into various distributions each of which would be characterised differently from a semantic point of view:

il est blessé (passive-present tense), il est venu (active-past tense); cette viande se mange froide (passive), Jean se regarde dans la glace (active - reflexive in meaning), Jean s' évanouit (active - "verbe pronominal essentiel")

Galichet, in his rather perversely entitled "Grammaire structurale du français moderne" expresses the argument in favour of the semantic definition of the passive:

La langue est à la fois corps et esprit.
Mais l' expérience prouve que, s' il ne faut pas négliger le corps, c'est jusqu'à l'esprit qu' il faudra remonter si l'on veut saisir son unité et les mécanismes qui la commandent en dernier ressort. (Galichet:1971:7)

His definition of the passive upon this basis can be summarised as "le sens de déroulement du procès" (Galichet:1971:101).

In the choice between a semantic and formal definition

of the passive a third possibility emerges; some compromise between the two positions, in which formal elements and semantic elements are not confused but in which certain "semantic" passives are left on one side because it is impossible to integrate them formally into a "grammatical passive" and in which formal rules are devised both to be internally consistent at a grammatical level and to coincide with the vast bulk of the "semantic" passive.

Each of the three choices facing us has its disadvantages. The semantic definition leads to formal anarchy. The structuralist definition does violence to our intuition about the semantic similarity or dissimilarity of various types of sentences. The compromise solution might lead to the worst of both worlds.

If we return for a moment to the foreign learner of French we can probably agree that he needs two things: clearness and consistency in definitions and the means to express his thoughts in a tongue of which he has only an imperfect intuitive grasp. Since his use of the foreign language is largely a conscious one he is likely to be trying consciously to relate semantic elements to forms. It seems, therefore, that the compromise position outlined above is likely to be the most appropriate. It is this approach that will be adopted in the next chapter.

There are more differences, however, between the approaches of traditional and structuralist grammars than the distinction between semantic and formal definitions. Wagner and Pinchon make a spirited attack on structuralist grammar in the "Avant-Propos" of "Grammaire française classique et moderne"

(Wagner et Pinchon:1962 (revised "avant propos"-1973):5-7).

Their objections may be summarised as follows:

- (1) The corpus is composed of simplified sentences or, if it is not, structuralist grammar often cannot deal with it.
- (2) If the analysis is successful it is too difficult for the learner to understand.
- (3) Basic structures, although of interest to the foreign learner, are not of interest to the native speaker since they are purified of everything which, "au cours des actes de parole, leur confère une couleur singulière".
- (4) The sentences are usually without context.
- (5) Literature as a source is largely ignored.

Points 2, 3 and 4 deal with methodology.

Point 2 may or may not be true, but, in any event, it does not provide a reason for abandoning structuralism in favour of methods which are in their own way just as complicated and provide no sure guidance at all. We may refer in this context to Grevisse's treatment of the agentive complement (Grevisse: 1964:147).

Points 3 and 4 criticise what structuralists would consider a merit, the concentration on basic structures and general cases rather than on contextually determined examples. Moreover it is also possible for the structuralist to generalise contextual rules (see Chapter 3).

The individual utterances or sentences referred to in the second part of point 3 cannot by definition be generalised at a grammatical level. They must be examined within the

area of style.

In any event, whatever the merits of points 3 and 4 as regards the native speaker, they clearly do not apply to the foreign learner until he has reached a very advanced stage.

Points 1 and 5 concern the composition of the corpus and may best be answered by introducing a few contrasting comments from the introduction to the first volume of "Grammaire structurale du français" (Dubois:1965:5).

Rather than choosing examples from the literature of this and preceding centuries Dubois selects "la moyenne des emplois actuels" based on the language of urban social groups, composed of people whose language acquisition is just complete. He excludes the language of literature on the grounds that it aims at aesthetic effects, as he also excludes professional jargons. Dubois' approach certainly seems more appropriate for this study and it is for this reason that we have used some material from the "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orléans" which conforms in general terms to these criteria.

Two other structuralist features will also be adopted as far as possible in this study. The first is the use of the whole sentence as the basis for analysis and the second is the application to the passive of the principle that linguistic features are defined formally in terms of their relationship to one another. Thus we shall attempt to relate active sentences to passive ones and one form of passive to another.

(iii) Linguistic areas to be examined.

The following major areas need to be examined:

1. The definition of the passive.

A study of existing grammars has revealed a wide variety of definitions. With the exception of Dubois all the grammarians studied limit the passive voice to the form "être" + p.p. In the case of Dubois other forms are included which are usually considered active in voice,

2. Forms of the passive.

In the case of pronominal verbs used passively it is clear that there is a good deal of confusion particularly on the following questions:

- (i) The recognition of the passive use,
- (ii) The relationship between the pronominal verb form and the "être" + p.p. passive.

3. Aspect and the passive.

A number of questions about perfectivity and imperfectivity, action and state need to be answered.

4. The agentive complement.

It would be desirable to lay bare the structure underlying the disparate criteria used to distinguish the two prepositions 'de' and 'par'.

5. A Comparison of the three passive types.

The analysis in Chapter 2 leads to the recognition of three types of passive. It would be desirable to examine their distributions in detail.

6. Reasons governing the selection of the passive.

This is an important topic much neglected by the "traditional" grammars. It will be the subject of Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

The forms of the passive in French.

- A. The definition of the passive.
 - (i) Introduction (p.36).
 - (ii) The active sentence (p.36-37).
 - (iii) The passive sentence. Passive Types 1, 2, 3
 - (iv) The "dummy" subject (p.41). (p.37-41).
 - (v) The neutral sentence (p.41-44).
- B. Problems associated with Passive Type 1.
 - (i) Aspect (p.45-58).
 - (ii) The Agentive complement (p.59-70).
- C. Problems associated with Passive Type 2.
 - (i) Polyvalence.
 - (1) Introductory comments (p.71).
 - (2) Some existing treatments of the pronominal verb (p.71-79).
 - (3) An analysis of the pronominal verb (p.80-85).
 - (ii) The animate/inanimate contrast in NP₁ (p.85-88).
 - (iii) The agentive complement in Passive Type 2. (p.88-89)
 - (iv) An analysis of some pronominal verbs from the "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orléans" (p.89-96).
- D. An analysis of Passive Type 3 (p.97-100).
- E. A comparison of the distribution of Passive Types 1, 2, 3 (p.101-108).

A. The definition of the passive.

(i) Introduction

It will be remembered that, for the purposes of this study we determined to make our definition of the passive a formal one but so designed as to coincide as far as possible with the 'semantic' passive, defined by Galichet as "Le sens de déroulement du procès".

We have decided to exclude from consideration such sentences as "il subit une attaque, il reçoit une gifle" where the form of the sentence is indisputably active and in which the passive sense is a function of the meaning of the verb itself. Such sentences are easy to recognise and present no general problem since they concern only a small number of lexical items.

The definition then that we are seeking is a formal one which includes all the remainder of the "semantic" passive but is not so comprehensive as to tend to destroy the active/passive contrast at a semantic level by including types of sentences clearly felt to be active.

(ii) The active sentence.

We begin by defining an active sentence as one which has the form:

$NP_1 + (V + NP_2)$
le lion mange l'homme

NP_2 may be zero but must be capable of realisation:

$NP_1 + (V + \emptyset)$
le lion mange

All active sentences are, therefore, fundamentally three term sentences: a verb phrase and two noun phrases.

An active sentence may also have the form:

$NP_1 + (V + \left\{ \begin{array}{l} de \\ à \end{array} \right\} + NP_2)$

il manque d'argent

il pense à sa mère

This form of active sentence can only rarely be transformed into a passive sentence of the "être" + past participle type:

il obéit à sa mère → sa mère est obéie.

Occasionally it may be transformed into a passive of the "symmetrical" verb type (see Chapter 2.A(iii)):

il manque d'argent → l'argent lui manque.

Verbs in active sentences always use "avoir" rather than "être" in their compound forms. The only exceptions to this rule are active sentences using pronominal verbs but even here popular usage replaces "être" by "avoir". Wagner and Pinchon give the examples:

je m' ai blessé

je m' ai coupé le doigt (Wagner et Pinchon:1962:282).

Sentences using verbs such as "venir", "mourir" which are conventionally described as active are redefined in this study as neutral (see Chapter 2.A (v)).

(iii) The passive sentence.

A passive sentence is any sentence resulting from a transformation in which NP_2 of an active sentence has become NP_1 of a new sentence. NP_1 of the active sentence becomes, if realised, NP_2 of the new sentence:

Active sentence → Passive sentence

le lion mange l'homme → L'homme est mangé par le lion

on ferme la porte → la porte se ferme

ça casse la branche → la branche casse.

There are three conditions which must be observed:

(1) The "signifié" of the sentence must remain unchanged.

We should note that this does not mean that the two sentences are interchangeable in any given context (see Chapter 3).

(2) Any auxiliary verb used in either the active or passive sentence must be used in both, with the exception of "avoir" and "être":

un lion peut manger un homme → un homme peut être mangé par un lion.

This condition does not apply to "avoir" and "être" which are in complementary distribution in active and passive sentences:

on a allumé le feu (active) → le feu est allumé (passive)

Condition (2) has the merit of ruling out formally pairs of sentences such as:

La glace fait tomber le garçon
Le garçon tombe.

The reasons for rejecting such sentences, which are accepted by Dubois as an active/passive pairing, have been given in Chapter 1 (p.14-16)

(3) NP₂ in the passive sentence takes, when realised, the form de)₊ NP and is called the agentive complement. The par)

restriction of the prepositions to "de" and "par" may appear a slightly arbitrary decision. We may ask whether there is any essential difference between the complements in sentences such as:

Jean est bruni par le soleil
Jean brunit au soleil .

Even if there were agreement that any difference in this case was marginal, the way is open for many more difficult cases. Surely the sentence:

(a) Il tue sous l'influence de la lune
is a "phrase active non-achevée" in which the object complement might be realised:

(b) Il tue des gens sous l'influence de la lune.

The combination of Dubois' passive→active transformation (Dubois:1967:82) and a wide definition of the agentive complement would allow sentence (a) to be considered passive because it could be transformed into the active sentence:

l'influence de la lune le fait tuer.

It seems undesirable then to try to cover the whole semantic area of the agent which will, therefore, be limited to noun phrases preceded by "de" or "par".

The passive sentence, like the active one, is a three term sentence:

NP ₁	VP	NP ₂	
l'homme	est mangé	par le lion	(passive)
NP ₁	VP	NP ₂	
le lion	mange	l'homme	(active)

Although NP₂ is usually unrealised in passive sentences the fact that it is underlying the sentence is recognised by the fact that it is always possible to realise it as the subject of the corresponding active sentence.

There are three forms of the passive:

- Type 1 "Etre" + past participle: Le chien a mordu Jean (active)
→ Jean a été mordu par le chien (passive)
- Type 2 Pronominal Verb: Jean a ouvert la porte (active) →
La porte s'est ouverte (passive)
- Type 3 Symmetrical Verbs: Le vent a plié la branche (active) →
La branche a plié (passive)

Type 1 retains the meaning of the active sentence most completely because of the realisation of NP₁ and NP₂ in both sentences. However NP₂ (the agentive complement) is usually omitted in practice. In this respect Type 1 resembles Types 2 and 3.

Type 2 Realisation of NP₂ is rare in modern French. The reason for this is that the pronominal verb form is ambiguous, although, by our transformational definition, we know that sentences containing pronominal verbs are often passive. The apparent contradiction is resolved when we realise that the desire to suppress reference to the agent is one of the major motivating factors of the passive. In the case of Passive Type 2 the process is carried to the extent of presenting NP₁ as if it were the agent. The subtle possibilities that the polyvalence of the pro-form allows will be discussed later (see Chapter 2 (i)).

Type 3 In practice NP₂ is usually absent. When the agent is expressed the form of the preposition or prepositional syntagma is so variable that we have decided to exclude it from consideration by our definition of the agentive complement.

We may recall in connection with this type of passive that our definition of the passive implies that, whereas an active sentence may have no passive counterpart:

il pense à sa mère,

a sentence is only considered passive if it has an active counterpart sentence which fulfils the required conditions:

la branche casse (passive)

le vent casse la branche (active).

(iv) The "dummy" subject

The absence of NP₂ in a given context may make it impossible as a matter of performance to transform a particular passive sentence into an active one. In this study we shall adopt the symbol Δ to represent the absent noun phrase. This seems preferable to the common practice of introducing "on" or "ça" since these elements, although their reference is not specific, are themselves options in the set of noun phrases from which a choice must be made. The sentence:

On ouvre la porte

is really almost as false an active transformation of:

la porte s'ouvre

as is: l' enfant ouvre la porte

The most satisfactory rendering is therefore:

Δ ouvre la porte.

An example of each type of passive would be as follows:

Type 1 Jean a été mordu \rightarrow Δ a mordu Jean (active).

Type 2 La porte s'ouvre \rightarrow Δ ouvre la porte (active).

Type 3 La branche plie \rightarrow Δ plie la branche (active).

Conversely the absence of NP₂ in an active sentence may necessitate the same procedure when the sentence is being transformed into a passive one:

Le lion mange \rightarrow Δ est mangé par le lion (Passive Type 1).

Jean ouvre à sept heures \rightarrow Δ s'ouvre à sept heures (Passive Type 2).

L'âge embellit \rightarrow Δ embellit (avec l'âge) (Passive Type 3).

(v) The neutral sentence

We have so far mapped out a definition of the passive based upon the active/passive contrast. However there are many sentences for which these active \rightarrow passive transformations

are not possible even in principle and which do not conform to our definition of an active sentence as consisting of three terms: $NP_1 + (V + NP_2)$ in which NP_2 may be unrealised. Such sentences should be considered as neutral in voice and are of three types:

(1) "Verbes pronominaux essentiels": Jean s'évanouit.

(2) Verbs which cannot have an object complement:

Jean vient, Jean dort.

This group includes those verbs which use "être" in their compound tenses.

(3) Sentences consisting of $NP_1 + \hat{\text{être}} + \text{adjective}$:

Jean est malade.

Such sentences are neutral in voice because it is impossible, without producing ungrammatical results, to apply to them the transformations upon which the active/passive contrast is based:

Jean s'évanouit \rightarrow * Δ évanouit Jean

or \rightarrow * Jean évanouit Jean

Jean vient \rightarrow * Δ vient Jean

Jean est content \rightarrow * Δ est content par Jean

We may summarise, then, as follows: an active sentence must have a realised or potential NP_2 (object complement). A passive sentence must have a realised or underlying NP_2 (agentive complement). Neutral sentences, on the other hand, are essentially two term sentences consisting of one noun phrase + a verb.

La neige fond, Pierre tombe, Le soleil brille,
Pierre se repentit, La tour s'écroule, Pierre est
content.

The last example includes an adjective but only one noun

phrase is involved. In this type of sentence we should note that "être" may be replaced by other "stative" verbs without the sentence thereby becoming active or passive in voice. Such verbs are "paraître, rester, sembler, se trouver, vivre etc".

We have noted that some verbs of group 2 use "être" for compound tenses whereas others use "avoir". One would expect such hesitation in circumstances where voice is neutralised. This hesitation may be taken further in the case of certain verbs which use either "avoir" or "être" with little or no difference in meaning. Larousse gives the following examples:

Ce livre a paru le mois dernier. Ce livre est paru le mois dernier.

L'autobus a passé devant chez nous. L'autobus est passé depuis. (Chevalier et al:1964:329).

Larousse considers all such sentences, however, to be active.

At a semantic level the absence of NP₂ means that there is no "déroulement du procès", or, at least, that the "sens du déroulement" is doubtful. It follows from this that just as the subject of an active sentence is the agent at a semantic level and the subject of a passive sentence is the "recipient" so the subject of a neutral sentence is neither an agent nor a recipient but plays a neutral role at a semantic level. We may be tempted to think of the subject of a sentence such as, "la neige fond" as the agent simply because of its position and the form of the verb but if we add a complement to produce the sentence, "La neige fond au soleil" we see how misleading this is.

The neutral sentences discussed so far are both

structurally and semantically neutral. It is however, possible for sentences to be structurally active but semantically neutral. This should not surprise us since we know that the active form, being unmarked, is polyvalent. We have already discussed sentences that are active in form and passive in meaning:

il subit une attaque.

Let us analyse the following passive sentence:

(a) Les enfants ont été couverts de feuilles par les oiseaux.

Two sentences which are structurally active may correspond to it:

(a₁) Les oiseaux couvrent les enfants de feuilles

(a₂) Les feuilles couvrent les enfants.

Sentence (a₁) is active both structurally and semantically, Sentence (a₂) is active structurally but is semantically neutral. It has no "sens de déroulement" linking the two noun phrases and consequently its subject is not semantically an agent. Many verbs may be used in semantically neutral sentences of this sort and the recognition of them is essential for the satisfactory description of the distribution of the prepositions "de" and "par" in the agentive complement (see Chapter 2.B(ii)).

B. Problems associated with Passive Type 1.

(i) Aspect.

A number of grammarians have noted that the "être" + past participle form of passive may have two semantic values which are often described as "state" and "action".

The Le Bidois give the following examples of "phrases d'état"

la porte est ouverte, le déjeuner est servi.

They point out that such sentences may be modified so that the semantic value of the verb changes:

la porte est ouverte à six heures, le déjeuner est servi à midi (Le Bidois:1967:411).

They do not, however, examine other tenses of the verb nor do they point out that this phenomenon does not occur in certain verbs. In the sentences:

il est observé, il est observé à midi

the semantic value of the verb remains the same.

For Dubois the problem does not exist. Because his descriptions are purely formal he is unable to accept two values for the same form. He therefore distinguishes only between Passive Type 1 which has the value "accompli" and Passive Types 2 and 3 which have the value "non-accompli". He admits that types 2 and 3 may be "accompli" in their compound forms. In this case he distinguishes between:

la branche s'est cassée

and la branche est cassée

by pointing out that, whereas the former may have both past and present reference, the latter may only have present reference (Dubois:1967:115).

Perhaps one of the best outlines of the problem is to be found in "Grammaire du français classique et moderne". The authors distinguish two values for the "être" + past participle passive, "l'état qui succède à un procès achevé" and secondly the "procès" itself as it unfolds. They point out that in order

to understand this phenomenon verbs must be divided into two groups: those which may have either of these two values in the passive and those which may only have the second value. These verbs may be distinguished semantically. The first group is "perfective" in the sense that the process the verbs describe is necessarily completed e.g. atteindre, résoudre, tuer, blesser. The second group is "imperfective" in that there is no such implication e.g. observer, aimer, suivre.

Wagner and Pinchon offer a technique for distinguishing "state" from "action". When the verb is to be interpreted as "action" it will correspond in tense to the active sentence which it matches in meaning:

<u>Actif</u>	<u>Passif</u>
Présent: on m'observe	Je suis observé
Imparfait: on m'observait	J' étais observé
Passé défini: on m'observa	Je fus observé
Futur: on m'observera	Je serai observé

(Wagner et Pinchon: 1962:279)

This is always the case with imperfective verbs, so that they pose no aspectual problem. We turn then to perfective verbs.

Implied by Wagner and Pinchon, though not stated, is that when a perfective verb is to be interpreted as "state" it does not correspond in tense with the active sentence which it matches in meaning:

on allume le feu	le feu est allumé
on avait allumé le feu	le feu était allumé
on aura allumé le feu	le feu sera allumé

According to Wagner and Pinchon the factor controlling the interpretation of perfective verbs as "action" or "state" is the presence or absence of a complement, by which they seem to mean an agentive complement. Where a complement is present they claim that "action" is the result (Wagner et Pinchon 1962:278).

As an illustration we may compare the following sentences:

- a) on a atteint le résultat - le résultat est atteint
- b) tous les candidats atteignent ce résultat - ce résultat est atteint par tous les candidats.

Wagner and Pinchon are not alone in suggesting that the agentive complement is the crucial factor. Gougenheim claims much the same (Gougenheim:1974:222). Nonetheless exceptions are not difficult to find. In the sentence:

Tous les jours des marchés sont faits

the absence of the agentive complement does not result in "state". In fact the value is "action". The corresponding active sentence would be:

Tous les jours on fait des marchés.

Conversely in the sentence:

Le vieux logement est déjà oublié par les habitants
the presence of the agentive complement does not result in "action" since the corresponding active sentence would be:

Les habitants ont déjà oublié le vieux logement.

It can be seen that even the best treatment of aspect in the passive in the general grammars of French is incomplete and perhaps misleading.

We turn now to two specialist treatments of the topic. The first of these is contained in an article by J.Svoboda in "Revue des Langues Romanes"(1954) entitled: Quelques remarques sur le passif français et italien. In the following discussion we have naturally concentrated on the French passive as more relevant to the study. Svoboda begins by claiming, correctly, that the topic has never been dealt with in any detail. He distinguishes "state" and "action" as two values of the passive and comes to the conclusion that:

l'idée passive dépend de l'aspect verbal (Svoboda:
1954:321).

He divides verbs into perfective and imperfective and points out that many verbs may have a perfective or imperfective meaning depending on the context.

His conclusions are as follows:

- (1) Perfective verbs express "action" when the passive form is in the "passé défini", the "passé composé", the "plus-que-parfait", the "futur antérieur".

The reason given for this is that:

Les temps passés expriment surtout les actions accomplies dans le passé; pour cette raison l'action momentanée passive étant mise en relief, les verbes parfaits passés excluent l'idée de l'état duratif (Svoboda:1954:322).

Exceptions, however, occur especially when the verb is accompanied by an "adverbe de temps duratif ou le complément de temps" (Svoboda:1954:322) We may illustrate this by the following example:

Il a été caché par ses amis (action)

Il a été caché toute la journée (state).

- (2) Perfective verbs express "action" when the passive form is the future:

Il pensait que Léonor serait mise dans un couvent (Svoboda:1954:322). Svoboda allows that the future may sometimes be ambiguous. It seems, however, that the future is sometimes indisputably "state", as in the sentence:

quand vous arriverez le travail sera fini.

- (3) Perfective verbs may express "action" in the present tense of the passive when the present is a "présent historique" or when a complement of time, place or manner is expressed. In the case of the "présent historique" the "action" that was a feature of the

past tense which could have been used is transferred to the present. As examples of the second case we might examine the following sentences:

- a. le feu est allumé à cinq heures - Action, complement of time
- b. le feu est allumé facilement - Action, complement of manner.
- c. le feu est allumé dans le foyer - Action or State, complement of place.

We note that a complement of place leaves the interpretation ambiguous, whereas sentences a. and b. tend to confirm Svoboda's contention.

(4) Perfective verbs very rarely express "action" when the passive form is in the imperfect tense.

(5) Perfective verbs express "action" in the present and imperfect tenses,

si celle -ci dépend d'une proposition ou d'un membre de la phrase, p.ex. « s'il hésite, il est perdu ».

(6) Perfective verbs express action in the present:

s'ils sont employés à l'impératif.

"..... que votre volonté soit faite en toute chose (Sue 'Juif') (Points 3-6 see Svoboda:1954:323).

The second specialist article devoted to the study of the action/state contrast is a contribution made by Schmitt-Jensen to "Etudes Blinkenberg" (1963) and entitled: "Vorgang" et "Zustand" des formes passives et leurs rapports avec l'aspect du verbe en français moderne.

Schmitt-Jensen's thesis is that the "action"/"state" contrast depends upon the "real time" at which the process took place. He distinguishes real time from tense since a

tense may be used for different real times. The present tense, for example may be used for the past (historic present) or for the future.

The terms "Vorgang" and "Zustand" are equivalent to "action" and "state" as we have been using these terms.

The following is as brief a summary as possible of this complex article:

Present time. When the verb can be combined with

"en ce moment" the interpretation is "Zustand".

The following tenses may be so used:

- 1) Present: l'hirondelle est blessée, doña Inès
(Month.Reine 125),
- 2) Conditional: Des centaines de milliers d'hommes
sont morts...et vous seriez arrêté par la mort
d'un seul être (Month.Reine 76).

One might question whether the verb in (2) is, in fact "Zustand". It would seem rather to be "Vorgang" since it is equivalent to the sentence:

la mort d'un seul être vous arrêterait.

- (3) Imperfect: (i) Indicative: c'est comme si ta conscience
était abolie....

(ii) Subjunctive: je voudrais que tout
fût fini pour moi (Marcel 140).

Where the present tense is iterative or is a "présent historique" or "présent scénique":

la reine est couronnée (titre de film)

the interpretation is usually "Vorgang", but may be ambiguous:

A l'extrême droite le corps du roi Ferrante est
étendu...(Month,Reine 189), (Summary of Schmitt-
Jensen:1963:66-70).

Future time. In sentences where the event is seen as future

from the point of view of the moment of utterance or relative to another verb in the sentence which provides the "point de repère", the interpretation is "Vorgang":

Les obstacles seront surmontés, dit il. La sincérité toujours surmonte les obstacles (Vercors 48).

If the event is presented as a sort of "maintenant décalé" where we project ourselves into the future and treat the event as if it were present in time, the interpretation is "Zustand".

A further guide is that where there is no "indication de temps ponctuelle" the sentence is usually "Vorgang". Where such an indication is present the sentence is ambiguous, though if the indication precedes the verb "Zustand" is the usual result:

dans cinquante secondes le diadème sera volé.

Other tenses used to express future time behave exactly as does the future tense itself:

Vorgang: Present tense: Enfin, tout ça changera peut-être si M. Arnaldon est élu (du G. 36).

Imperfect: Si le préfet des études était averti qu'un objet de cette valeur se trouvait dans cette chambre, il n'hésiterait pas à faire briser la porte (Val. L. 234).

Conditional: Le prince et Inès sont également coupables. Mais Inès seule serait tuée! (Month. Reine 73). (Summary of Schmitt-Jensen: 1963 70-73).

Past time,

Imperfect: This tense in its role as "le passé non-limité

is almost always "Zustand". Schmitt-Jensen draws attention to the complementary nature of the imperfect on the one hand and on the other the "passé défini", (in written French) and the "passé composé", (in spoken French), both of which usually express "Vorgang".

As with the present tense iterativity leads to "Vorgang":

chaque matin j'étais éveillé par ma joie (Gide 54).

This is also the case with what Schmitt-Jensen calls "imperfectum de conatu":

j'étais étranglé par des créanciers.

Passé défini: Apart from the occasions when it occurs after certain conjunctions: dès que, quand, lorsque, the "passé défini" almost always expresses "Vorgang".

Temps composés: In the case of "temps composés" "Vorgang" is the usual result (Summary of Schmitt-Jensen: 1963: 73-78).

It is clearly impossible to do justice in a summary to an article characterised by its detail, by the number of its examples and the way in which "exceptions" are carefully analysed and explained. However, it is probably fair to say that the essence of the article lies in this quotation:

A part le passé où nous avons une distinction formelle, l'aspect est lié au "time" pas au "tense", la catégorie formelle (Schmitt-Jensen: 1963:82).

One wonders, however, whether the difference between the present tense used with the meaning "en ce moment":

L'hirondelle est blessée, doña Inès

and, on the other hand, the present used with iterative force

or to express "des vérités éternelles":

...toutes les nouvelles du jour sont filtrées au
cribles de leur édifiante sévérité (du.G.85)

(Schmitt-Jensen:1963:67).

Un roi se gêne, mais il n'est pas gêné (Month.Reine 28)

(Schmitt-Jensen:1963:67).

is really one of "time". Surely all these cases are present in time. The difference lies rather in whether the action is regarded as "accompli" or "non-accompli". The same applies to the use of the future passive form. It is this distinction which underlies the various uses of tenses in the present and the future.

The following table together with its notes sets out the broad lines of the relationship between aspect accompli/aspect non-accompli, action/state and complements of various types.

The picture it presents is, it is hoped, clearer than that offered by Svoboda or Schmitt-Jensen.

TABLE 1

Aspect of Active form (accompli/non-accompli.)	Active form	Passive form	Action/State	Aspect of passive form (accompli/non- accompli)
Non-accompli (imperfective)	on ouvre la porte } on blesse le soldat }	{ la porte est ouverte +X } { le soldat est blessé +X }	Action	{ Non-acc. }
Accompli (perfective)	on a ouvert la porte } on a blessé le soldat }	{ la porte est ouverte (+0) } { le soldat est blessée (+0) } { la porte a été ouverte (+X) } { le soldat a été blessé (+X) }	State Action	{ Accompli }
Non-accompli	on ouvrirait la porte } on blesserait le soldat }	{ la porte était ouverte +X } { le soldat était blessé +X }	Action	{ Non-acc. }
Accompli	on avait ouvert la porte } on avait blessé le soldat }	{ le porte était ouverte (+0) } { le soldat était blessé (+0) } { la porte avait été ouverte (+X) } { le soldat avait été blessé (+X) }	State Action	{ Accompli }
Non-accompli	on ouvrira la porte } on blessera le soldat }	{ la porte sera ouverte +X } { le soldat sera blessé +X }	Action	{ Non-acc. }
Accompli	on aura ouvert la porte } on aura blessé le soldat }	{ la porte sera ouverte (+0) } { le soldat sera blessé (+0) } { la porte aura été ouverte (+X) } { le soldat aura été blessé (+X) }	State Action	{ Accompli }
Non-accompli	on ouvrirait la porte } on blesserait le soldat }	{ la porte serait ouverte +X } { le soldat serait blessé +X }	Action	{ Non-acc. }
Accompli	on aurait ouvert la porte } on aurait blessé le soldat }	{ la porte serait ouverte (+0) } { le soldat serait blessé (+0) } { la porte aurait été ouverte (+X) } { le soldat aurait été blessé (+X) }	State Action	{ Accompli }
Accompli	on ouvrit la porte } on blessa le soldat }	{ la porte fut ouverte (+X) } { le soldat fut blessé (+X) }	Action	{ Accompli }

Table 1 - Notes

- (1) The definition of aspect is based upon that found in "Grammaire structurale du français - Le Verbe" and in the Larousse grammar. The latter makes the following comment concerning the aspect of active verb forms:

Chaque forme composée exprime que l'action est achevée. Elle décrit l'aspect accompli de l'action. Par opposition, chaque forme simple exprime que l'action n'est pas encore achevée. Elle décrit l'aspect non-accompli de l'action (Chevalier et al: 1964:328).

The only modification we have made to this is to classify the past historic (le passé défini) as "accompli".

It is an anomalous form largely confined to written French. Since its distribution in written French corresponds to that of the "passé composé" in spoken French in contexts where the "passé composé" has past reference it seems preferable to classify it, like the passé composé, as "accompli".

- (2) A passive form is considered to be "action" if the tense of "être" corresponds to the tense of the verb in the active counterpart sentence; otherwise the passive form is considered to be "state":

Action: le soldat est blessé par l'ennemi → L'ennemi blesse le soldat.

State: le soldat est blessé → Δ a blessé le soldat.

We must not confuse the term "state" as defined above with the term "stative" which is used of certain verbs in sentences where there is no "sens de déroulement du procès":

il paraît intelligent.

There is, however, a relationship between them in that a passive "state" sentence:

il est ému

is semantically close to the neutral sentence:

il est troublé

where the verb is "stative".

(3) The symbol X is used to represent any complement consistent with "action":

a) Agentive complements. Because such complements provide an agent they throw into relief the unfolding of the process and therefore stress "action".

b) Complements of manner, place and time, which indicate iterativity or a "general truth":

Chaque fois qu' il joue, il est battu.

Dans la guerre beaucoup de soldats sont tués, also tend to impart a value of "action".

(4) The symbol O is used to represent any complement which is consistent with "state":

expressions of time suggesting duration: la porte est ouverte maintenant.

(5) If we consider first the active forms we note that each "non-accompli" active form has an "action" counterpart; the condition being that a complement of type X be expressed.

Each "accompli" active form has two corresponding passive forms. One of these expresses "state" and is almost equivalent semantically to $NP_1 + \hat{\text{être}} + \text{adjective}$. The other form expresses "action". In neither case is a complement usually necessary to ensure this interpretation.

We note that the state/action contrast cuts across the accompli/non accompli contrast.

- (6) The passive form corresponding to the "passé défini" always expresses "action" because it is in complementary distribution with the imperfect form of the passive which almost always expresses "state".

In the spoken mode the imperfect is, of course, in complementary distribution with the "passé composé" which expresses "action".

- (7) Where no complement of either type X or type O is present the interpretation of the sentence as "action" or "state" varies according to whether the form of "être" in the passive is:

(a) simple or (b) compound

If (a) the interpretation is usually state except for the future which is often ambiguous.

If (b) the interpretation is usually action.

A sentence including a "simple" passive can only become "action" by adding a complement of type X.

This means in effect, making the verb "non-accompli", usually because it becomes iterative.

- (8) Where the complement is shown bracketed in the table it is not necessary for the "action"/"state" contrast but simply reinforces the existing value.
- (9) As it is possible to reverse the value of "simple" passives, so it is possible, but rare, to reverse the value of "compound" passives:

la porte a été ouverte (action) → la porte a été ouverte pendant trois heures.

- (10) Allowing for the fact that it is always possible to

reverse the "state" / "action" value of a verb because of the various elements which may introduce aspectual nuances into a sentence the best guide, in general terms, to the "action"/"state" contrast is provided by notes 7, 8, 9.

(ii) The agentive complement

One of the most intractable problems associated with Passive Type 1 is the nature of the agentive complement and in particular the distinction between complements introduced by "de" and those introduced by "par". A brief summary and criticism of the treatment given to this topic in the standard grammars has already been given (Chapter 1 B.(iv)).

A recent study of the problem by Sylvia Straub comes to the following conclusions:

- a. "Par" must precede the agentive complement noun in French passive sentences with verbs which denote a non-state.

Le chien est lavé par Marie

*Le chien est lavé de Marie.

- b. Either "de" or "par" may precede the agentive complement noun in French passives with verbs denoting a state, but only if the stative verb requires the agentive complement noun to designate human beings.

L'enfant est aimé de/par ses parents

*L'enfant est aimé de/par ce mur.

- c. 'De' must precede the agentive complement noun in all other passive sentences in French, that is in passives with stative verbs which allow (or require) the agentive complement noun to be non-animate.

1. In some of the sentences substituting 'par' for 'de' makes the sentence ungrammatical.

Le dernier chapitre est suivi d'une table des matières.

*Le dernier chapitre est suivi par une table des
matières.

2. In others, the resulting 'par'-passive sentence is grammatical, but the verb denotes a non-state.

L'élite de la société est formée de ces gens.

L'élite de la société est formée par ces gens.

It is asserted that these rules hold not only for the passive sentences cited in this study; but for all passive sentences in French (Straub:1974:593).

Before going on to examine these conclusions in some detail it would be useful to list for reference the examples used by Straub:

1. Ces résultats ont été obtenus par des calculs remarquables.
2. Il est armé d'un fusil.
3. Le soldat a été frappé d'une balle.
4. L'enfant est couvert de boue.

*1¹ Des calculs remarquables ont obtenu ces résultats.

*2¹ Un fusil l'arme.

3¹ Une balle a frappé le soldat.

3¹¹ Le soldat a été frappé par une balle.

4¹ La boue couvre l'enfant.

4¹¹ L'enfant est couvert par la boue.

5. Ces livres ont été écrits par des hommes d'état.

6. Le chien est lavé par Marie.

7. La fenêtre a été brisée par un rocher.

8. Une grande maison sera construite par le Président.

9. Cette cravate a été achetée par Robert.

*5¹ Ces livres ont été écrits d'hommes d'Etat.

*6¹ Le chien est lavé de Marie.

*7¹ La fenêtre a été brisée d'un rocher.

*8¹ Une grande maison sera construite du Président.

*9¹ Cette cravate a été achetée de Robert.

10. L'enfant est aimé par/de sa famille.

11. Le professeur était respecté par/de ses élèves.

12. Ce Président sera admiré par/de tous les citoyens.

13. La place était encombrée de curieux.

14. Le garçon est adoré du grand-père.

15. Les animaux sont adorés par certains peuples.

14¹ Le garçon est adoré par le grande père (sic).

16. Cet homme est accablé de douleur.

17. Cet homme est accablé par la charge.

18.(a) Le scandale est étouffé par la famille.

* (b) Le scandale est étouffé de la famille.

19.(a) Le musicien est avenglé par sa passion.

* (b) Le musicien est avenglé de sa passion.

20. Ce cours est enseigné * du/par le professeur depuis long-temps.

21. Pendant une période tres brève, cet homme a été respecté de ses collègues.

22. Le menu est composé d'un hors d'oeuvre et d'un plat de viande.

23. L'élite de la société est formée de ces gens.

23¹ L'élite de la société est formée par ces gens.

23¹¹ Ces gens forment l'élite de la société.

24. Le menu est composé *du/par le garçon.

25 (a) Ses découvertes émerveillent les élèves.

(b) Les élèves sont émerveillés de ses découvertes.

(c) Les élèves sont émerveillés par ses découvertes.

- 26 (a) Ma conduite étonne Jean.
(b) Jean est étonné de ma conduite.
(c) Jean est étonné par ma conduite.
27. Le mois de février est précédé du/*par le mois de janvier.
28. Le dernier chapitre est suivi d'/*par une table des matières.
- 29 (a) Le général est suivi de l'armée.
(b) Le général est suivi par l'armée.
- 30 (a) La décadence militaire est précédée de la décadence
politique.
(b) La décadence militaire est précédée par la décadence
politique.

(Straub:1974:583-593).

Straub begins by defining the agentive complement. An agentive complement is one which functions as subject of a synonymous active sentence. Examples 1 and 2 are therefore discounted because there is no corresponding active sentence. Sentence 4 is discounted because the nearest corresponding active sentence (4^1) is not synonymous but corresponds to sentence 4^{11} . Sentence 3 is discounted because active sentence 3^1 is said to be synonymous with sentence 3^{11} . There is a 'non-sequitur' in this argument. The fact that 3^1 is synonymous with 3^{11} does not preclude it from being synonymous with 3. In effect 3 is excluded because, although the complement noun may act as the subject of a corresponding active sentence the possibility of generating an alternative agent leads Straub to conclude that the complement with 'de' is not itself agentive and hence that is not the subject of 3^1 . The subject of 3^1 would be derived from the 'par' complement in sentence 3^{11} .

What appeared then to be a simple test—the existence of a synonymous active sentence — has been complicated by the

need to decide whether the complement is really agentive or not. Although Straub rejects the complement in 3 as agentive despite the existence of sentence 3¹ she accepts sentences 16 and 23. The reason for this is that she believes that there are two homonyms 'accabler' and two homonyms "former" and that this ambiguity, which receives direct expression in the use of 'de' or 'par' in the passive, is also detectable semantically in the formally ambiguous active sentence. This applies to the following verbs and pairs of sentences: accabler (16, 17) composer (22, 24), former (23, 31), émerveiller (25(b), (c)), étonner (26(b)(c)), suivre (29(a)(b)), précéder (30(a)(b)). Each of these verbs is supposed by Straub to be two homonyms, one stative, the other non-stative. A clear example would be "former":

Ces gens forment l'élite de la société

could be paraphrased:

(a) Ces gens sont l'élite de la société (stative verb)

for which sentence 23 would be the passive equivalent.

or (b) Ces gens créent l'élite de la société (non-stative verb)

for which sentence 23¹ would be the passive equivalent.

Other examples are more difficult to grasp:

La décadence politique précède la décadence militaire.

could mean:

(a) La décadence politique a lieu avant la décadence
militaire (stative)

for which sentence 30 (a) would be equivalent

or (b) La décadence politique mène à la décadence militaire
(non-stative)

for which sentence 30(b) would be equivalent.

Examples 27 and 28 show that because of the nature of the nouns involved it is not always possible to produce both a

' stative and a non-stative version of the 'same' sentence.

In some cases it is extremely difficult to distinguish any ambiguity in the active form:

Ses découvertes émerveillent les élèves

should correspond to both 25(b) and 25(c) but with a different meaning in each. Indeed Straub might have been tempted to reject the complement of sentence 3 as agentive because 'frapper' could surely never be a stative verb in an active sentence, and to have accepted sentence 3 as equivalent to 3¹ would have broken rule a.

In order to judge the truth of Straub's rules we must be sure what she means by stative and non-stative in this context. It seems clear that she is not considering the stative/non-stative value of the passive sentence but the essential value of the verb itself (i.e. in the active voice) but in fact she makes no attempt to define the terms. Since, however, she includes 'aimer' amongst stative verbs it is worth considering whether the stative/non-stative distinction corresponds to the imperfective/perfective distinction amongst verbs. We could then argue that imperfective (stative) verbs (observer, aimer etc) are followed by de/par as in Rules b and c whereas non-stative verbs, corresponding to perfective verbs (atteindre, tuer, etc.) are followed by 'par' as a Rule a. If this could be established, a simple structural test could be applied to distinguish imperfective (stative) from perfective (non-stative) verbs:

Perfective le feu est allumé → on a allumé le feu.

Imperfective Jean est observé → on l'observe .

Sentences 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 19 are all constructed round verbs which are perfective as judged by this test. Since they all

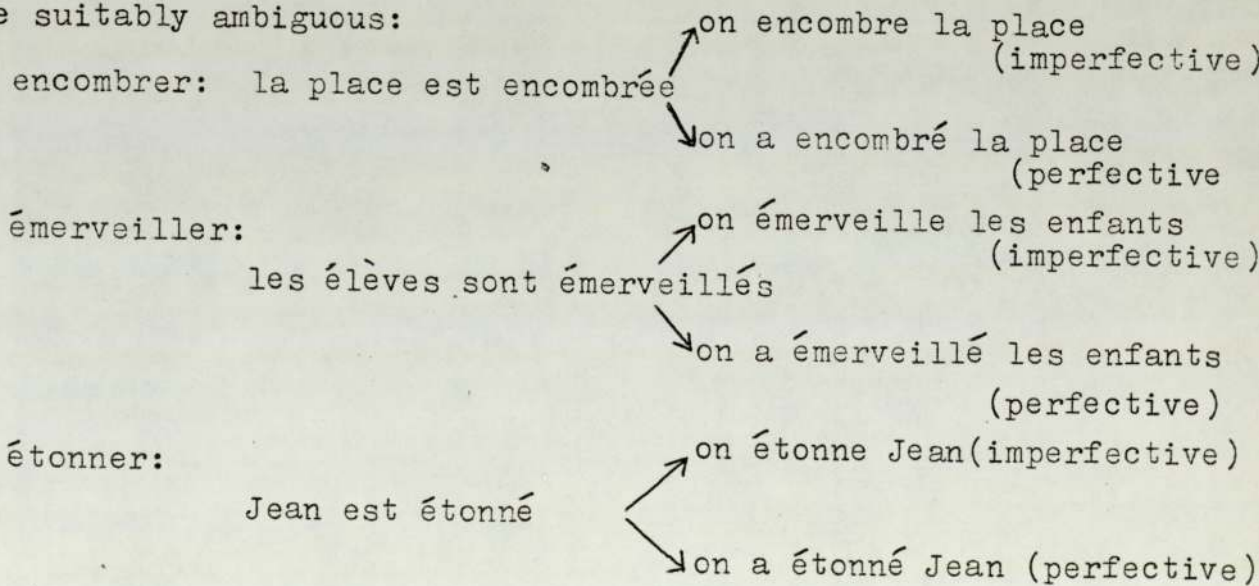
employ 'par' in the passive complement non-stative and perfective coincide (see Rule a).

Sentence 20 is more difficult since it is difficult to decide whether 'enseigner' is perfective or imperfective. Probably both values are possible:

- (a) Les enfants sont enseignés → on enseigne les enfants (imperfective).
- (b) Ce fait est enseigné → on a enseigné ce fait (perfective).

Sentences 10, 11, 12 contain imperfective verbs. Their complements, consisting of animate nouns only, are introduced by 'de' or 'par'. This is consistent with the interpretation of stative as imperfective.

In the case of those verbs which, Straub claims, use 'de' when stative and 'par' when non-stative our imperfective/perfective test seems to work quite well. Verbs in sentences based on 13, 25, 26, for instance might be shown by our test to be suitably ambiguous:



In the case of a few verbs the test cannot be applied since they require the expression of the agentive complement in the passive. The ambiguity of a verb can only be demonstrated in the absence of a complement. Where a complement is present it usually determines the value of the sentence.

For example:

l'armée est précédée

is, even if grammatical, a very unlikely sentence. The addition of the complement, however, results in a verb which is clearly imperfective and not ambiguous:

l'armée est précédée par le général.

It seems then that there is a strong connection between what Straub seems to mean by stative/non-stative and the imperfective/perfective contrast. Unfortunately it is possible to find examples of verbs which seem to be imperfective, that is to say "stative" in the sense that "aimer" is "stative" (see Rule b) but which break Rule C. The verb 'attirer' for example must surely be classified as stative in the same sense as 'aimer' and yet according to Rule C stative verbs which allow inanimate agentive complements must use 'de' to introduce the complement. This is contradicted by the sentences:

Les femmes sont attirées par le succès.

*Les femmes sont attirées du succès.

We may draw from this fact two conclusions:

- (1) The imperfective category is too broad to coincide with stative as the word is used in Straub's study.
- (2) There is no other common factor linking verbs like "aimer, respecter" with verbs like "former, composer, consister" which justifies their being classified as "stative".
- (3) Some other grouping of verbs is required which will be more consistent but will preserve the undoubted insights contained in Straub's article and especially in rule C.

Here, then, is a suggested definition of the terms, together with revised rules:

Perfective verbs: These verbs imply necessary completion of the process which the verb describes.

Only transitive verbs concern us here. They may be recognised by the "aspect accompli" of their "simple" passive forms (passive Type 1) when the latter are unaccompanied by an agentive complement or other complement leading to imperfectivisation (see Chapter 2 B(i)).

le feu est allumé → on a allumé le feu.

Imperfective verbs: These verbs do not imply necessary completion of the process which the verb describes.

Transitive imperfective verbs can be recognised by the "aspect non accompli" of their "simple" passive forms:

Jean est aimé → on aime Jean.

There is a subset of imperfective verbs of which the members are intransitive and, more importantly in this context, are stative, referring not to a process as such but to a state:

Jean reste content etc.

These verbs are essentially stative.

Other verbs, however, are transitive (having therefore a Passive Type 1) but may be rendered stative by the context:

Une table des matières suit (=est après) le dernier chapitre.

Stative verbs: Sentences in which an essentially stative verb is used or in which a verb is used statively are not active in voice but are neutral.

Some are both structurally and semantically neutral in having no NP₂:

Il paraît intelligent.

Some are structurally active and semantically neutral. Although two NP's are present no process is being described and so there is no "sens de déroulement". Since no process is taking place the subject of such a sentence is not semantically the agent: (see Chapter 2.A(v):

Trois plats composent le menu.

Ces gens forment (= sont) l'élite de la société.

Non-stative verbs: These occur in sentences which are formally and semantically active in voice. The sentences have the form NP₁ + V + NP₂ and have a "sens de déroulement du procès". All perfective verbs are non-stative except for the subset of imperfective verbs just described.

There is no formal way in which the subject of a sentence that is active in form is shown to be an agent or not an agent. When a sentence is given a passive form, however, the distinction is marked by "par", which precedes an agent and "de" which precedes a "non-agent". The following examples taken from Straub illustrate this distinction:

Sentence 1(a) Active formally and semantically:

Ces gens forment (= créent) l'élite de la société.

1(b) Passive formally and semantically:

L'élite de la société est formée par ces gens.

Sentence 2(a) Active formally but semantically Neutral:

Ces gens forment (= sont) l'élite de la société.

2(b) Passive formally but semantically Neutral:

L'élite de la société est formée de ces gens.

The rules can now be stated as follows:

1. All non-stative verbs may have their agentive complement introduced by "par".
2. Perfective "non-stative" verbs e.g. tuer, allumer, etc must use "par" to introduce an agentive complement.
3. Imperfective "non-stative" verbs e.g. attirer, abriter must also use "par" to introduce an agentive complement, but a subset of these verbs can use either "de" or "par" to introduce the complement. These verbs are those which can only have an animate noun in the agentive complement. The choice between "de" and "par" is a stylistic one.

The list of such verbs is quite short, and would include "aimer, respecter, adorer, admirer" but not observer, voir, etc.
4. Imperfective "stative" verbs e.g. composer, suivre, encombrer etc., must have "de" before the noun in the agentive complement.

Note that some of these verbs may, as Straub suggests, have two values: non-stative, followed by "par":

L'homme est suivi par la femme,

stative, followed by "de":

L'homme est suivi de la femme.

This sentence is more or less equivalent to:

la femme est derrière l'homme

Other similar verbs are: précéder, composer

It is significant that French commentators describing the races at the Olympic games in Montreal used "suivi de" to describe the order of competitors in the races.

The definition of "stative" given above accounts for a number of Straub's examples: 13, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29(a), 30(a).

There are a number of Straub's examples where "de" is used but where the verbs do not fall into our definition of "stative". In these sentences the complement is not genuinely agentive. In some cases it is possible to show this by actualising the real agent:

4. L'enfant est couvert de boue (par son compagnon).

16. Cet homme est accablé de douleur (par les effets de son crime).

3. Le soldat a été frappé d'une balle (par son ennemi).

In other cases the agent cannot be realised but may, nevertheless, be felt to be underlying:

26(b) Jean est étonné de ma conduite (par moi).

We note that "par" is the real agentive preposition. With the exception of the small group of verbs: aimer, admirer etc., the use of "de" indicates that the complement is not agentive; either the real agent is underlying or the sentence is neutral and therefore has no agent at all.

It must be pointed that because the judgements about whether a verb is stative or non-stative and whether an agent is genuinely agentive or not are semantically based an area of doubt may still surround some sentences. It is perhaps regrettable that the treatment of the agent cannot be wholly formal but it is clearly not possible since the concepts of "agent" and "recipient" are part of the semantic plane corresponding to the subject-object contrast or subject-agentive complement contrast on the grammatical plane.

C. Problems associated with Passive Type 2.

(i) Polyvalence.

(1) Introduction.

We now come to a more detailed examination of the second form to fulfil our definition of the passive, the pronominal form.

Even more than Passive Type 1 the pronominal verb form is polyvalent. Whereas a sentence including "être" + past participle may be either neutral or passive, a sentence using a pronominal verb may be neutral, passive or active. As one would expect grammarians have a variety of ways of dealing with this polyvalence. Some seek to establish structural distinctions and then relate these to certain "uses" of the pronominal verb. Others take the "uses" of the pronominal verb as the starting point, adopting thereby a semantic approach. It is not possible to establish two clear groups of grammars in this respect but, in the interests of clarity we begin with the ones that lay most stress on the grammatical distinctions, moving on subsequently to the more semantically based ones.

(2) Some existing treatments of the pronominal verb.

Grammaire Larousse. In keeping with the structural approach adopted in this grammar the authors describe separately the grammatical and semantic planes.

At a grammatical level they distinguish three groups of pronominal verbs:

Construction transitive directe

Jean s'aperçoit dans le miroir.

Transitive indirecte:

Le maître s'aperçoit de l'absence de son élève.

Intransitive:

La ville s'aperçoit dans le lointain.

In the first of these, they point out, "se" is independent, whereas in the two latter categories "il forme bloc avec le verbe" (Chevalier et al:1964:323-4).

At a semantic level they distinguish two main categories for the use of "se".

The first of these includes the reflexive and reciprocal uses and is called the "Emploi autonome". The second is the "Emploi non autonome". These are the verbs traditionally called "pronominaux essentiels". The authors write:

On pourrait, par un trait d'union, marquer graphiquement cette union:

se - repentir de/se-repentir

s' - abstenir de/s'-abstenir

se - souvenir de/se-souvenir

(Chevalier et al:1964:324)

As can be seen there is no real attempt to relate the two levels and moreover there is no mention in the Larousse grammar of any connection between the pronominal verb and voice.

The categories of direct, transitive, indirect transitive, and intransitive are certainly valid as applied to pronominal verbs, but more appropriate to this study would be a structural approach which used contrasts of voice.

Grammaire du français classique et moderne. Wagner and Pinchon accept though with some misgivings a distinction between verbs which are "essentiellement pronominaux" and those which are "réfléchis". The reciprocal use is seen as a special case of the reflexive use.

In the case of verbs which are "essentiellement pronominaux"

they write that the pronoun has no function, either because the verb does not exist in a non-pronominal form or because if it does exist, it has a different distribution from the non-pronominal form.

They refer to the passive use of "une forme pronominale active" (Wagner et Pinchon:1962:285). It seems preferable, however, to consider the form itself as unmarked for voice but as capable of having active, passive, and neutral interpretations. There is no systematic examination of the relationship between sentences using pronominal verbs and other forms of active or passive sentences.

As in the case of the Larousse grammar, criticism of Wagner and Pinchon rests more on its incompleteness than on its inaccuracy.

Syntaxe du français moderne. The Le Bidois treatment of pronominal verbs, like that of Larousse is undertaken within the context of a discussion of transitivity:

L'action n'a pas toujours besoin de sortir du sujet, pour trouver le complément d'objet qui donne à l'expression sa clarté et son intégrité; ce complément elle peut très bien l'avoir sous la main, dans le sujet lui-même (Le Bidois: 1967:397).

They are reluctant to accept the traditional division into "verbes réfléchis" (se faire, se regarder, se laver) and "pronominaux dits essentiels" (se repentir, s'arroger, s'abstenir, s'apercevoir de, s'aviser de, se douter de etc.) Relying on historical examples as far distant as the "Chanson de Roland" they suggest that these verbs whether accompanied by a preposition or not are actually all "verbes réfléchis" (Le Bidois: 1967:401).

Despite this confident pronouncement their following paragraph seems to allow two exceptions:

... à peu près tous les pronominaux que nous venons de voir (sauf se souvenir et se repentir) sont au fond de simples réfléchis....(Le Bidois:1967:401)

The authors also except another small group of verbs from their all-embracing category. These are verbs such as "s'en aller", "s'endormir", "s'enfuir", "se mourir" which would normally be included amongst the "pronominaux essentiels". The Le Bidois write:

Il est aisé de comprendre que ces verbes ne sont que des intransitifs, que leur action par conséquent ne passe aucunement sur le pronom qui les accompagne, et que ce pronom n'est pas un complément d'objet. Ce n'est, en réalité, qu'un représentant emphatique du sujet. (Le Bidois:1967:398).

This last sentence is true in the sense that, with the exception of "s'endormir" the pronoun cannot be commuted with any other complement. This is precisely the reason for which "s'en aller", "s'enfuir", "se mourir" must be considered as "pronominaux essentiels". In fact these three verbs fall into two groups: "se mourir" and "s'enfuir" on the one hand and "s'en aller" on the other. The implication of "emphatique" is that there is a form without the pronoun which is "non emphatique". This is true of "s'enfuir/fuir" and especially so of "se mourir/mourir". However it is surely impossible to claim that "s'en aller" is an emphatic form of "aller". The verb "s'endormir" appears misplaced here altogether. The pronoun is commutable and the verb therefore a true reflexive: "il s'endort/il endort son fils".

Finally the Le Bidois claim that the "pronominaux essentiels ne sont, à proprement parler que des pronominaux devenus constants" (Le Bidois:1967:401). Surely this is precisely what most grammars mean when they use the term "pronominaux essentiels"!

In the paragraphs devoted to "Le pronominal en fonction de passif" the Le Bidois rely for the recognition of this phenomenon upon the similarity of meaning between:

Cette maison a été construite en un an
and Cette maison s'est construite en un an (Le Bidois:1967:408).
The pronominal form is, therefore, related to the passive form "être" + p.p. instead of being related directly to an active form. The latter method seems preferable since it enables the whole complex of pronominal verb functions to be seen as a whole in their relationships with one another. It is the method employed in this study and the reason why all the values of the pronominal form will be examined rather than simply the passive use. The Le Bidois method has the further disadvantage that it regards sentences as equivalent which, in fact differ in aspect:

Cette maison se construit (non accompli)

Cette maison est construite (accompli).

The alternative method does not have this disadvantage since it contrasts sentences such as:

On construit cette maison (non accompli)

Cette maison se construit (non accompli)

The Le Bidois' treatment of pronominal verbs is undermined by the categorising of verbs in accordance with their historical origins rather than with their twentieth century distributions.

Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. Vinay and Darbelnet illustrate, in an extreme form, the semantic approach. They postulate a separate pronominal voice comprising four categories:

(a) La Voix pronominale réfléchie: l'action retombe vraiment sur le sujet.

Il s'est tué (volontairement)

Servez-vous!

(b) La voix pronominale réciproque.

(c) La voix pronominale qui rend subjective une réalité objective.....

Il se leva et s'habilla

Il s'est tué (accidentellement)

(d) La forme pronominale d'habitude. L'action indique la façon ordinaire dont les choses se passent.

Le saumon se mange froid.

Cela ne se dit pas. (Vinay et Darbelent:1958:134).

They do not deal with the commutability of the "reflexive" pronoun with other possible complements, nor the constructions into which the verb may enter e.g. se mettre à faire qu.ch., which might clarify the question of voice. They deal with the values of the pronominal verb rather than its structure. The approach adopted is understandable in the context of a book on comparative stylistics and yet the analysis is highly subjective. Category (b) is possibly the only one which is fully valid. It is doubtful whether Categories (a) and (c) could be distinguished by the use of the suggested definitions. The examples seem at first sight to offer some help but when one tries to decide into which category to put "se laver", "se coiffer" etc., the inadequacy of the criteria becomes apparent.

Category (d) is an interesting one. Mario Wandruszka also makes this point but extends the definition to include possibility or necessity; a so-called modal use:

un tissu qui se lave = qui peut être lavé
= qu' on peut laver (Wandruszka:
1970:132).

cela ne se fait pas (Mémoires d'une jeune fille
rangée, p.34, Simone de Beauvoir,
Paris 1958) (Mario Wandruszka:
1970:134).

Unlike Vinay and Darbelnet, however, he does not claim this as a primary category but as one of the possible "valeurs" of the pronominal form. The merits of this analysis will be discussed in Chapter 2.E., since a contrast with Passive Type 1 will be required.

Réflexions sur la voix passive. Other comments by Wandruszka are also concerned with semantic values. He distinguishes:

la voix pronominale qui offre une équivalence
fonctionnelle à la voix passive:

Ils affirmaient unanimement que la guerre pouvait
et devait être évitée (La force de l'âge p.207
Paris 1960).

Il me convainquit. La guerre ne pouvait plus s'éviter
(La force de l'âge p.367 Paris 1960) (Wandruszka:1970:
131).

We should note that Passive Types 1 and 2 are by no means always interchangeable (see Chapter 2.E).

He later affirms:

il y a une équivalence non moins manifeste entre la voix pronominale et la voix active impersonnelle: Le principal ne s'apprend pas dans les écoles: c'est d'avoir bon caractère! (Les Thibaut, Roger Martin du Gard p.188 Paris 1940). Mais ce sont là des choses qu'on n'apprend pas dans les écoles (Les Racines du Ciel p.271 by Romain Gary, Paris 1956) (Wandruszka:1970:132).

It is strange that Wandruszka should not relate the three forms involved in these examples. The relationships seem fairly clear:

<u>Active</u> (impersonal use)	<u>Passive</u>
on pouvait et devait éviter la guerre	Type 1. La guerre pouvait et devait être évitée. Type 2. la guerre pouvait et devait s'éviter.
on n'apprend pas le principal dans les écoles	Type 1. le principal n'est pas appris dans les écoles. Type 2. le principal ne s'apprend pas dans les écoles.

Interestingly Wandruszka claims that the pronominal form constitutes a true middle voice:

quand le processus est attribué à quelque chose qui en est à la fois le sujet et l'objet:
Puis les boutiques s'ouvrent, les rues s'animent
....A midi, les restaurants se remplissent en un clin d'oeil.....Vers deux heures, la ville se vide peu à peu (La Peste, theatre, recits, nouvelles. A.Camus Paris:1962) (Wandruszka:1970:134).

In fact this example is not essentially different from those discussed above. All of the sentences making up the quotation from Camus are passive. However it is impossible to reconstruct them as active sentences with 'on' as the subject without conveying the impression that the same agent is involved in all of the processes described. On the other hand if more specific agents are realised it is possible to transform these passive sentences into active ones. The "signifié" remains much the same:

Puis les marchands ouvrent les boutiques, des passants animent les rues.... A midi des clients remplissent, en un clin d'oeil, les restaurants etc....

What Wandruszka calls the middle voice is the characteristic passive use of the pronominal form: the total suppression of the agent by means of a sentence which "mimics" an active one. This accounts also for the following examples:

Je n'eus pas même à délibérer, je n'hésitai pas, je ne calculai pas, ma décision se prit sans moi
(La Force de l'Age p.82) (Wandruszka:1970:134).

Wandruszka suggests that the pronominal form is being used to describe "un processus qui se déroule «tout seul» ". It is true that Simone de Beauvoir is using the ambiguous form of the pronominal verb to allow an inanimate noun to assume the characteristic agentive force of an animate one. We should not generalise from this metaphor; an inanimate subject is rarely the agent of the process described by a pronominal verb. Conversely an animate subject is rarely found in a sentence with a passive interpretation(see Chapter 2 C(ii)).

(3) An analysis of the pronominal verb.

Having examined briefly a number of structural and semantic treatments of the pronominal verb, it remains now to analyse the form as best befits the approach adopted in this study.

The form of the pronominal sentence is as follows:

$$NP_1 + NP_2 + V$$

where NP_2 is a pronoun corresponding in person to NP_1 and where NP_2 has the same referent as NP_1 :

Jean s'habille

This form may be extended to include a NP_3 :

$$NP_1 + NP_2 + V + NP_3.$$

NP_3 may or may not be preceded by a preposition:

Jean se repent de son crime

Jean se peigne les cheveux.

For the purpose of this analysis we include here only prepositional constructions in which the preposition has a purely formal role and we exclude those in which the preposition has a semantic role. Examples of the latter would be:

Jean se lave la figure dans la salle de bains.

Jean s'assied sur une chaise.

Sentences including pronominal verbs may be active, passive or neutral.

Active sentences

Type 1. NP_2 is commutable with other complements.

This type is limited to transitive verbs:

il se lave/ il lave son fils

Type 2. NP_3 is added, with or without a preposition

There are two subsets of Type 2:

(a) Both the pronoun (NP_2) and NP_3 are commutable

This applies to direct transitive verbs:

il se lave la figure/il lui lave la figure/il se lave les mains.

(b) Only NP_3 (introduced by a preposition) is commutable

This applies to the indirect transitive verbs:

il se souvient de cette journée/il se souvient de sa jeunesse.

We note that the pronoun (NP_2) is not commutable in sentences of Type 2(b). It is, in fact, a variable prefix and not a separate constituent of the sentence structure.

Active sentences including pronominal verbs usually have animate subjects.

Passive sentences.

A pronominal sentence is passive if NP_1 can be recognised as NP_2 of an active sentence which is its semantic counterpart:

le magasin se remplit/ Δ remplit le magasin.

cette observation s'adresse à vous/ Δ vous adresse cette observation.

This transformation can be applied to direct transitive verbs only.

Passive sentences usually have inanimate subjects.

Neutral sentences.

A sentence is neutral if NP_2 is not commutable and no NP_3 is possible. The sentence is then equivalent to non-pronominal neutral sentences. Verbs which feature in such sentence are intransitive the sentence consisting in effect of two constituents only $NP_1 + V$, where V is preceded by a variable prefix, the pronoun.

The pronoun has no contrastive function :

Jean s'en va

is structurally comparable to:

Jean vient.

Similarly:

La tour s'écroule

is comparable to:

Le sel fond.

Such sentences are neutral because at a semantic level there is no "sens de déroulement du procès" and at a grammatical level they cannot be shown by means of a surface transformation to be either active or passive.

Neutral sentences may have either animate or inanimate subjects.

We note in conclusion the following points:

Where neutral sentences employ pronominal verbs these are always of the "verbe pronominal essentiel" type. Either they have only a pronominal form (s'écrouler, s'en aller) or, where a non-pronominal form also exists, its distribution is different from that of the pronominal form (passer/se passer).

Where passive sentences employ pronominal verbs, these are always "verbes réfléchis".

Where active sentences employ pronominal verbs, these are of two sorts:

(i) The pronoun commutes, the verbes are "verbes réfléchis" (Active Type 1 and 2 (a)).

(ii) The pronoun does not commute but NP₃ does.

The verbs are a subset of "verbes pronominaux essentiels" (Active Type 2 (b)).

It can be seen then that the classification of pronominal

verbs which seems most appropriate for this study cuts across the traditional divisions of "verbes pronominaux réfléchis" and "verbes pronominaux essentiels".

The reciprocal use.

Since this study is organised on the principle of defining by contrast, it seems desirable to discuss briefly the one remaining interpretation of the pronominal verb form, the "forme pronominale réciproque".

There is no doubt that the reciprocal form is active in interpretation since it is clearly in essence a three constituent sentence:

$$NP_1 + NP_2 + V$$

Nevertheless there seem to be a number of complications which the established grammars do not recognise, but which we may illustrate by contrasting the verbs "se regarder", and "se battre".

The sentence:

Jean et Paul se regardent

may have two interpretations:

- (1) Active (Type 1): Jean se regarde - Jean regarde Jean
Paul se regarde - Paul regarde Paul
- (2) Active (reciprocal): Jean regarde Paul
Paul regarde Jean

The sentence "Jean et Paul se battent" may, however, have three interpretations:

- (1) Active (Type 1): Jean se bat - Jean bat Jean
Paul se bat - Paul bat Paul
- (2) Active (reciprocal): Jean bat Paul
Paul bat Jean

(3) Active (Type 2(b) Jean et Paul se battent (avec
d'autres garçons).

Interpretation (3) derives from: Jean se bat avec d'autres garçons et Paul se bat avec d'autres garçons.

Interpretation (1) assumes that "se battre" has the same distribution as "battre quelqu'un".

Interpretation (3) assumes that "se battre" has a different distribution, that it has become a separate lexical item classified as a "verbe pronominal essentiel".

Interpretation (2) implies the acceptance of the structure of (1) combined with the meaning of (3). It appears then that "battre" may be treated as having the same distribution as "se battre" or as having a different distribution. These two possibilities even allow two reciprocal forms with different distributions:

(a) Jean et Paul se battent l'un l'autre (avec un bâton).

(b) Jean et Paul se battent l'un avec l'autre.

Sentence (a) is based on "battre quelqu'un"

Sentence (b) is based on "se battre avec quelqu'un".

Although the verb "se battre" has frequently been used as an example by grammarians (Le Bidois:1967:403)(Wagner and Pinchon:1962:290)(Grevisse:1964:537)(Dubois:1967:117) the complexities alluded to are not mentioned, the verb being treated as if the constructions into which it could enter were the same as those for a verb such as "se regarder".

In the case of some verbs lexicalisation is so complete that the pronominal form has a totally different distribution from the simple form. When this is the case a reciprocal interpretation of the pronominal form may not be possible:

"Les deux soldats se rendent" can only mean

"Soldat A se rend et soldat B se rend"

However a reciprocal interpretation of the pronominal form of "rendre"; that is to say a form having the same distribution as "rendre", is quite possible:

Les deux soldats se rendent les sommes empruntées.

We have in this case two verbs "se rendre", one of which is used in neutral sentences and is to be classified as a "verbe pronominal essentiel" because the pronoun is not commutable in the same distribution, and the other, which is used in active sentences (Type 2(a)) (see Chapter 2.C(i)(3)) where it has essentially the same distribution as "rendre".

Space precludes further examination of the topic of the reciprocal use of pronominal verbs. Suffice it to say that the examples examined cast some doubt on the Le Bidois assertion:

Tous les verbes transitifs peuvent être employés de la sorte (Le Bidois:1967:403).

(ii) The animate/inanimate contrast in NP₁.

Although we can show by surface transformation that a sentence employing a pronominal verb is active or passive we receive a more immediate cue from the nature of NP₁. So common is it for the agent to be animate that NP₁ when animate is almost always interpreted as the agent. It is for this reason that, as Wagner and Pinchon point out, we cannot use the following sentence:

tant d'étudiants se sont inscrits cette année
as a substitute for:

tant d'étudiants ont été inscrits cette année
(Wagner et Pinchon:1962:285).

Conversely an inanimate subject is usually interpreted

as the "recipient" and both the following sentences are, therefore, passive in voice:

ces machines s'installent facilement.

ces machines sont installées facilement.

In the system as a whole, then, animate subjects (NP_1) and inanimate subjects (NP_1) are in complementary distribution in active and passive sentences which include pronominal verbs.

Nevertheless, in an interesting article, Svoboda gives a number of sentences which employ a pronominal verb with an animate subject and yet have a passive interpretation:

- (a) à Paris seulement se rencontrent ces créatures au visage candide (Balzac Peau I. p. 71. Classiques Garnier),
- (b) cela c'est l'homme. Il se reconnaît à son manger (Bloch La Nuit III 7) (Svoboda:1957:350).

Sentence (a) has three possible interpretations:

- (i) Reciprocal
- (ii) Reflexive
- (iii) Passive

Possibility (ii) can be discounted since, being improbable semantically, it would need to be expressed unambiguously.

Possibilities (i) and (iii) remain and only the context can determine the correct one. In fact the sentence quoted is preceded by a lengthy description of one of these "créatures au visage candide". The sentence is an aside to the reader describing not the relationship between fictional characters but that between the reader and the sort of people he might meet in Paris. Consequently (iii) becomes the only real possibility in the context.

Sentence (b) has two possible interpretations:

(i) Reflexive

(ii) Passive

This is a difficult example to deal with especially when we compare (b) which is clearly passive with a sentence such as (c) Il se reconnaît dans la glace which is just as clearly active. The first part of (b), "cela c'est l'homme" has some influence upon our judgement. Nevertheless even if we reduce (b) by omitting the first part and further modify it to make it resemble (c) as closely as possible the contrast of passive and reflexive remains:

Il se reconnaît à son visage (Passive).

Il se reconnaît dans la glace (Reflexive).

The answer can only lie in the usual contexts in which "reconnaître" is used. The act of recognition usually involves two different entities so that a reflexive interpretation can only be contrived by a carefully selected context of which "dans la glace" is an example. In the case of "reconnaître", then, the semantic value of the verb is in conflict with the tendency to assume that an animate subject of a pronominal verb is the agent of the action.

An interesting example of a sentence in which the subject is animate and which may have either an active (reflexive) or a passive interpretation is "il se tue". The ambiguity of this sentence can only be resolved by the context:

(1) Il s'est tué à coups de revolver (active).

(2) Il s'est tué dans un accident (passive).

Sentence (2) is close in meaning to the following sentence:

(3) Il a été tué dans un accident.

Nevertheless there remains in (2) the possibility, the suggestion even, that the person referred to by the subject pronoun may have contributed to his own death, for example by his carelessness. This feeling is due to the fact that the subject is animate and that there is, as we have seen, a close connection between animate NP's and agents.

(iii) The agentive complement in Passive Type 2.

There is no doubt that the passive sentence employing a pronominal verb is normally characterised by the lack of a realised agentive complement:

ce vin se boit frais

cela ne se fait pas.

Grammarians cite examples of realised agentive complements from seventeenth century French but generally maintain that they cannot be realised in modern French (Grevisse:1964:542, Le Bidois:1967:408-409).

Svoboda, however, provides a number of examples from modern texts:

- (1) par leurs mains souillées l'oeuvre s'accomplit
(Rolland-Triomphe p.57).
- (2) toutes les formes s'expliquaient par le moment,
le milieu....et la race (Mornet-Cours Comp.fr.p.289).
- (3) une réforme s'impose et se fera par les historiens
(id.p.248).
- (4) tout va se régler bientôt par une flèche (Malraux-
Voie Royale p.160).
(Svoboda:1957:351).

He foresees the objection that these complements are not agentive but are complements of instrument or means but asserts:

Ce qui importe c'est que le complément y représente le sujet logique de l'action (Svoboda:1957:351).

It seems probable that by "sujet logique" he means "sujet grammatical" of the corresponding active sentence although he may mean that the complement is the agent of the process described. In the case of sentences (1), (2), (4), one might claim that the complement is not the "sujet logique" in either sense of the expression. The sentences could be rewritten in active form as follows:

(1a) Ils accomplirent l'oeuvre de leurs mains souillées.

(2a) On expliquait toutes les formes par le moment, le milieu.....et la race.

(4a) Bientôt on va tout régler par une flèche.

Sentence (3) however, is not open to this objection. The complement is animate and therefore much more likely to be agentive. The sentence corresponds closely to the following sentence of Passive Type 1.

3(a) une réforme est imposée et sera faite par les historiens.

An active transformation of (3) would be:

3(b) Les historiens imposent et feront une réforme.

It seems then that we must accept Svoboda's contention that the agentive complement still occurs occasionally with the pronominal form.

(iv) An analysis of some examples of pronominal verbs.

(Étude sociolinguistique sur Orléans-interview 001).

Interview 001 provides twenty-six examples of pronominal verbs. Only the language of the interviewee has been considered relevant for the purposes of analysis.

An enumeration of the pronominal verbs found in interview 001

Transcript page

1. je me suis toujours ennuyé de mon clocher 5
2. on cherchait a s'améliorer 6
3. j 'ai travaillé.....à Paris - pour finir de me perfectionner..... 6
4. on se lève très tôt 10,19
5. ...y a aussi l'attrait - de l'achat-qui se malheureusement aussi s'amenuise de plus en plus 12
6. alors après euh l'abbattage se fait quoi alors c'est encore un abbatage artisanal que va se
7. lui aussi évidemment s'éliminer tout doucement 12
8.il y a aussi là un satisfécit de se dire:bien euh c'est tombé comme j'estimais 12
9.on appelle ça les approches, ...ça s'appelle les approches 13
10. voilà tu vas t'en aller 16
11. mais on s'éloigne pas tellement.... 19
12.on a un métier qui se perd 21
13. je sais pas comment ça va se passer 22
14. un gosse je pense qu'à seize ans il s'est révélé ou alors c'est pas la peine 29,30
15.moi je me plains pas de la municipalité 31
16. (notre ville)... on ne s'est pas mal relevé 31
17.moi je ne me trouve pas mal administré 33
18. des.... jeunes hein qui se posent 34
19. un mouvement comme ça ne peut pas se déclencher avec cette rapidité s'il n'y a pas un mécontentement général.... 37
20. et je crois que ça se reflète dans toutes les classes de la société 40

21. évidemment les:gens se tirent mais enfin je:- on:
sent pas une acrimonie entre les classes.... 41
22. le type aigri qui n'a peut - être pas - réussi sa
vie et: qui: à ce moment - là s'en prend à la société 42
23. ils vont se diriger vers le biftek hâché 45
24. vous avez des:des gens qui s'expriment aussi bien:
chez un ouvrier quand c'est ils possèdent bien leur
sujet.... 52
25. si j'ai: la: la fainéantise de me déplacer pour... 64,60
26. on se surveille mutuellement pour ça..... 69

First analysis.

There are fifteen active sentences:

Nos: 1,2,3, 8,11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 21,
26.

Nos: 21, 26 are of the reciprocal type.

There are seven passive sentences:

Nos: 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 19, 20.

There are four neutral sentences:

Nos: 4, 10, 13, 17.

Active sentences.

Type 1. Nos 2, 3, 11, 14, 16, 18, 23, 24, 25.

The test of this type of active sentence is the commutability of the pronoun with other object complements.

No.2. on cherchait à s' améliorer/on cherchait à améliorer Δ

Examples can be found in which this verb would have a passive interpretation:

son caractère ne s'améliore guère/ Δ n'améliore guère son caractère.

We note the animate/inanimate contrast between these pairs of sentences.

No.3 j'ai travaillé à Paris pour finir de me perfectionner
/j'ai travaillé à Paris pour finir de perfectionner△
A straightforward example.

No.11. on s'éloigne pas tellement/on éloigne△ pas tellement.

The animate subject ensures an active interpretation
but when the subject is inanimate the sentence may be passive
or active:

Passive: (a1) la joie s'éloigne / (a2) △éloigne la joie

Active:(b1) le train s'éloigne / (b 2) le train l'éloigne de
sa femme

Sentence (b1) seems more related to (b2) than it does to a
sentence in which "le train" becomes the object complement:

(b3)△ éloigne le train de la gare.

No.14. il (un gosse) s'est révélé/il a révélé△

Clearly an active sentence. Where the subject is
inanimate a passive interpretation usually results:

son génie s'est révélé/ △ a révélé son génie.

No.16. On ne s'est pas mal relevé/ on n' a pas mal
relevé△. An active sentence.

A sentence with an inanimate subject:

le pays se relèvera vite de ses ruines

may be construed as passive, as equivalent to:

les habitants relèveront vite le pays de ses ruines.

Alternatively we may consider that "le pays" is being
used metaphorically to represent "les habitants" and should
therefore be treated as animate in this instance. In effect
we are thrown back on an initial semantic decision before we
can decide whether to treat such a sentence as active or passive.

No.18. des jeunes gens qui se posent

We might argue that this sentence is neutral on the

grounds that "se poser" has a different distribution in this sentence from the distribution of "poser". However the sentence:

le moindre succès pose un auteur (Mansion:1972:p:79)
seems to have much the same distribution as No.18.

Consequently we have classified the latter as active.

No.23. ils (les gens) vont se diriger vers le bifteck hâché/
ils vont diriger Δ vers le bifteck hâché.

No.24. des gens qui s'expriment aussi bien...../des gens
qui expriment Δ aussi bien.....

No.25. j'ai la fainéantise de me déplacer pour...../ j'ai
la fainéantise de déplacer Δ pour.....

Sentences 23, 24, 25 have no special features to comment on.

We note that all these active sentences have animate subjects.

Type 2(a) No.8 Il y a un satisfécit de se dire: bien
c'est tombé comme j'estimais/ Il y a un satisfécit de
dire Δ à Δ .

Both NP₂ (the pronoun) and NP₃ (in this case a sentence) are commutable.

Type 2(b) Nos 1, 15, 22.

No.1 je me suis toujours ennuyé de mon clocher.

The pronoun is not commutable in this construction but the presence of a commutable NP₃ introduced by "de" makes this an active sentence comparable to:

Je regrette mon clocher.

No.15.....moi je me plains pas de la municipalité.

No.22 le type aigri qui.....s'en prend à la société.

In both these sentences the pronoun is not commutable

without changing the distribution of the verb. In both cases NP₃ is commutable.

Active Sentences - reciprocal type. Nos 21, 26.

No.21. évidemment les gens se tirent mais enfin on sent pas une acrimonie entre les classes.

According to French informants "se tirent" is an abbreviation of the "popular" expression "se tirer dans les jambes" (to exchange mild abuse). This case is similar in some respects to that of "se battre" (see p.83-84) in that the pronominal form and the non pronominal form may have different distributions. It seems that in this case the reciprocal use has a different distribution from all other uses of "tirer" whether pronominal or not.

No.26 on se surveille mutuellement pour ça.

This is a straightforward example. When not used reciprocally the verb may be used in active sentences of Type 1. The consequent ambiguity is removed by the addition of "mutuellement".

A	surveille	B)	}	on se surveille (Reciprocal)
B	surveille	A)		
A	surveille	A)	}	on se surveille (Active Type 1)
B	surveille	B)		

Passive sentences. Nos 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 19, 20.

These sentences are shown to be passive by applying to them the active transformation.

No.5. il y a aussi l'attrait de l'achat qui malheureusement aussi s'amenuise de plus en plus/malheureusement Δ amenuise aussi de plus en plus l'attrait de l'achat.

No.6. l'abbatage se fait/ Δ fait l'abbatage

No.7. un abbatage artisanal qui va lui aussi s'éliminer tout doucement/ Δ va éliminer tout doucement l' abbatage artisanal.

No.12. on a un métier qui se perd/ Δ perd le métier.

It is difficult to decide whether this sentence is best categorised as passive or neutral. This depends on whether "se perdre" and "perdre quelque chose" have the same distribution. If they do not and are consequently to be regarded as separate verbs the sentence should be classified as neutral.

No.19. un mouvement comme ça ne peut pas se déclencher avec cette rapidité...../ Δ ne peut pas déclencher un mouvement avec cette rapidité.

No.20. ça se reflète dans toutes les classes de la société/ toutes les classes de la société reflètent ça.

This is a difficult case. The meaning of the verb makes an active interpretation a possibility despite the inanimate subject.

No.9. On appelle ça les approches....ça s'appelle les approches.

In this case the interviewee himself effects the transformation from active to passive in the course of his utterance.

We note that the subjects of all these passive sentences are inanimate.

Neutral sentences Nos 4, 10, 13, 17.

No.4. on se lève très tôt.

The difficulty here is to decide whether "se lever" has the same distribution as "lever". In this study we have decided to treat them as separate verbs, and

consequently, to place "se lever" amongst the group of "verbes pronominaux essentiels", Since no NP₃ is possible it follows that sentences using "se lever" will be neutral.

In the case of sentence No.12 the opposite judgement was made and "se perdre" was regarded as essentially the same verb as "perdre". There will always be an unavoidable element of arbitrariness in such decisions.

No.10. Voilà tu vas t'en aller.

This is a straightforward example.

No.13. je sais pas comment ça va se passer.

The pronoun is not commutable since clearly "se passer" and "passer" are separate verbs having different distributions.

No.17. moi je ne me trouve pas mal administré.

Once again we judge that "se trouver" and "trouver" are separate verbs with different distributions.

The sentence as a whole is, of course, passive since "se trouver" + past participle is equivalent to "être" + past participle.

The difficulty experienced in categorising some of these examples with regard to voice reminds us again that the strength of the pronominal verb at a semantic level is the subtlety of the nuances that it allows.

D. A further analysis of Passive Type 3.

The third form of the passive concerns verbs which Dubois calls "verbes symétriques" (Dubois:1967:82). He characterises them as follows:

La simple inversion des syntagmes sans modification de verbe ni addition d'auxiliaire. En ce cas le syntagme sujet devenu complément d'agent est précédé d'un démarcatif (à, de, par etc.,) (Dubois: 1967:82)

The above analysis, to which I am much indebted, is similar to that set out earlier in this study except that we have limited the circumstances in which NP₂ can be accepted as the agentive complement (see Chapter 2.A(iii)).

We recall that for a sentence to be recognised as passive it must have an active counterpart. In the case of symmetrical verbs this means more often than not that the subject of the passive sentence is inanimate and the subject of the active sentence is animate:

Active		Passive
on réussit le coup	-	le coup réussit
on a claqué la porte	-	la porte a claqué
on continue le travail	-	le travail continue

(Dubois:1967:108).

However this is by no means always the case. The subjects of both sentences may be animate:

Le médecin guérit le malade - le malade guérit
(Dubois:1967:108).

Conversely both subjects may be inanimate:

Le vent casse la branche - la branche casse
ça augmente les prix - les prix augmentent
(Dubois:1967:108).

Dubois points out that there is a type of symmetrical verb that is still productive of new verbs in modern French. (Dubois:1967:112-113). It is the group of verbs derived from "devenir + adjective":

Ça noircit le papier - le papier noircit.

Most of these are "ir" verbs but this is not necessarily the case:

On triple les prix - Les prix triplent.

Verbs are not necessarily limited to one form of passive and it is this that accounts for such pairs of passives as:

- 1) elle a embelli
- 2) elle est embellie.

Sentence (1) is the "passé composé" form of the verb "embellir" used in a symmetrical construction.

Sentence (2) is a type 1 transformation of the active sentence:

△ l'embellit.

The active/passive relationship described above is the essential characteristic which enables all these verbs to be considered as "symmetrical". There are, however, differences between them to which we should briefly allude. In addition to the parallel active/passive sentences already discussed, some verbs are capable of being used in neutral sentences:

- | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Remuer: | (a) on remue le bateau | (active) |
| | (b) Le bateau remue | (passive) |
| | (c) Jean remue | (neutral) |
| Rouler | (d) on roule la balle | (active) |
| | (e) la balle roule | (passive) |
| | (f) Jean roule par terre | (neutral) |

(Examples adapted from the Ple Goffic and N. Combe McBride: 1975:73-75).

Sentences (c) and (f) are neutral because no NP² is involved and therefore no active/passive transformation is possible. This occurs when the subject is animate in the case of certain verbs.

In the case of other verbs, however, sentences resembling (c) and (f) in form are interpreted as "phrases actives non achevées". Depending upon the verb such sentences may be grammatical or ungrammatical:

Je commence.

*Je colle.

There appears to be no means of categorising these verbs except by enumerating the members of each group. Only the -ir verbs equivalent to "devenir+ adj " form a homogeneous group from the point of view of the structures into which they can enter.

Examples of symmetrical verbs taken from the "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orléans" (interviews 001 and 004) are as follows:

	<u>Transcript Page</u>
001	
No.1. la vente sous cellophane malheureusement va s'étendre <u>j'en peinerai énormément</u>	11
No.2. qu' est-ce <u>qui manque</u> dans.....une ville comme Orléans	24
004	
No.3. c'est évidemment un élément <u>qui compte</u> beaucoup	14
No.4. un étudiant <u>qui est logé</u> en chambre universitaire paie 90 francs par mois.	18

Sentence 1 illustrates the principle characteristic of the symmetrical verb: its ability to appear in its simple form in both active and passive sentences.

ga me peinera (active) / j'en peinerai (passive)

Sentence (2) is a more complex case. In addition to the sentences

la ville manque d'argent (active) /

l'argent manque à la ville (passive)

there is another active form of the following type:

il ne manque jamais son coup.

This construction with its lack of preposition is so different from the other active form that one is inclined to think in terms of two homonyms especially as the verbs are rather different semantically. Two further examples of "manquer" are to be found in interview 001:

(a) on manque de tennis

Transcript page
33

(b) il manque vraiment d'équipement sportif 33

Although the construction looks similar it seems best to interpret (a) as active and (b) as passive. The presence of the preposition in (a) does not affect the classification of the sentence as active (see Chapter 2.A(ii) Sentence (b) is passive because it is an "impersonal" version of

l'équipement sportif manque

which is a passive transformation of the active sentence

on manque d'équipement sportif.

Sentence 3 is a straightforward example:

on compte l'élément pour beaucoup (active) /

c' est un élément qui compte beaucoup.

Sentence 4 includes a symmetrical verb although it is not the symmetrical form of the passive that is employed here. This example illustrates the fact that most, if not all, symmetrical verbs have a "symmetrical" passive and also an "être" + p.p. passive.

E. A comparison of the distribution of Passive Types
1, 2, 3.

The following tables together with the accompanying notes relate the distributions of the three passive types in accordance with a number of linguistic contrasts.

TABLE 2

Form	Accompli(+) Non-accompl (-)	Action(+) State (-)	Sequential references							
			Ante	Contemp.	Post	Ante	Contemp.	Post		
1. une branche est cassée +X	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. une branche est cassée(+0)	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. une branche a été cassée(+X)	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. une branche était cassée +X	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
5. une branche était cassée(+0)	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
6. une branche avait été cassée (+X)	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
7. une branche sera cassée +X	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
8. une branche sera cassée(+0)	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
9. une branche aura été cassée (+X)	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
10. une branche serait cassée +X	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
11. une branche serait cassée(+0)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
12. une branche aurait été cassée (+X)	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. une branche fut cassée (+X)	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+

TABLE 2 cont....

Form	Accompli(+) Non-accompl (-)	Action(+) State (-)	Sequential references									
			Level 2	Level 1	Ante	Contemp.	Post	Contemp.	Ante	Post		
14. une branche se casse	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. une branche s'est cassée	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. une branche se cassait	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17. une branche s'était cassée	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18. une branche se cassera	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19. une branche se sera cassée	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20. une branche se casserait	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21. une branche se serait cassée	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22. une branche se cassa	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23. une branche casse.	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24. une branche a cassé	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25. une branche cassait	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
26. une branche avait cassé	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27. une branche cassera	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28. une branche aura cassé	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29. une branche casserait	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30. une branche aurait cassé	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31. une branche cassa	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 3

Form	Passive Type	Possible realisation of an agentive complement	Possibility of animate subject
1 une branche est cassée +X	1	+	+
14 une branche se casse	2	-	-
23 une branche casse	3	-	-(+)
3 une branche a été cassée	1	+	+
15 une branche s'est cassée	2	-	-
24 une branche a cassé	3	-	-(+)
13 une branche fut cassée	1	+	+
22 une branche se cassa	2	-	-
31 une branche cassa	3	-	-(+)
4 une branche était cassée +X	1	+	+
16 une branche se cassait	2	-	-
25 une branche cassait	3	-	-(+)
6 une branche avait été cassée	1	+	+
17 une branche s'était cassée	2	-	-
26 une branche avait cassé	3	-	-(+)
7 une branche sera cassée +X	1	+	+
18 une branche se cassera	2	-	-
27 une branche cassera	3	-	-(+)
9 une branche aura été cassée	1	+	+
19 une branche se sera cassée	2	-	-
28 une branche aura cassé	3	-	-(+)
10 une branche serait cassée +X	1	+	+
20 une branche se casserait	2	-	-
29 une branche casserait	3	-	-(+)
12 une branche aurait été cassée	1	+	+
21 une branche se serait cassée	2	-	-
30 une branche aurait cassé	3	-	-(+)

Notes on Tables 2 and 3.

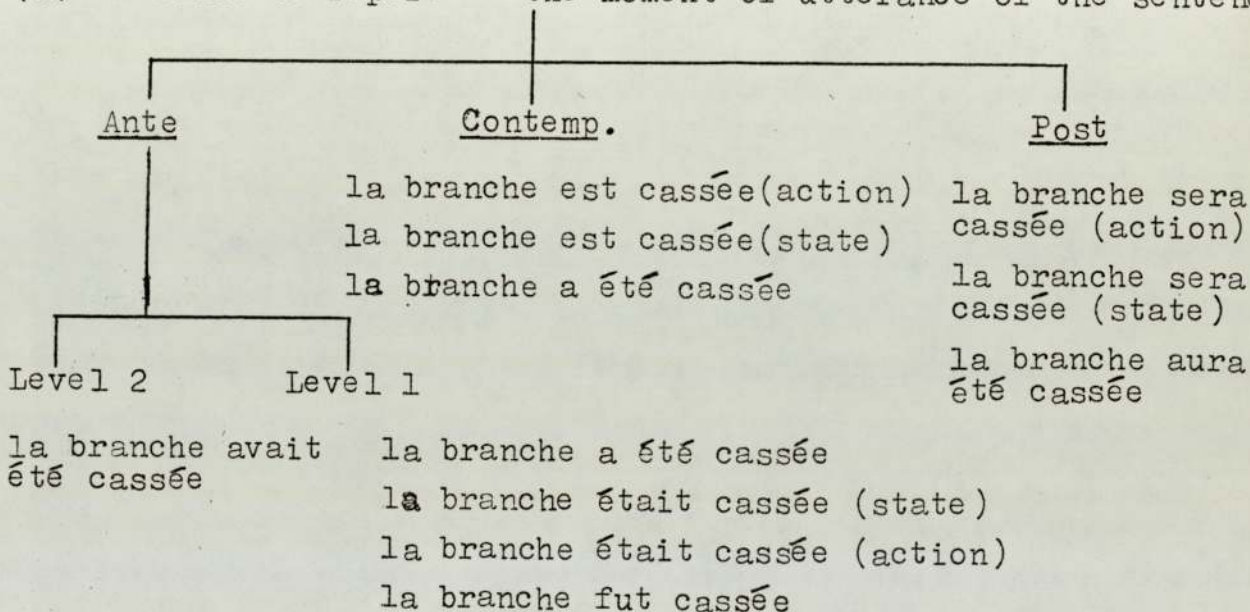
The comparison of a large number of forms in a series of fundamental contrasts implies a certain level of abstraction from the intricacies of "performance". This is an intrinsic part of the structuralist approach which in a modified form has been adopted in this study. General patterns, the relationships between forms, are stressed so that it is impossible, for example, to take account of all the shades of meaning which may be implied by the imperfect tense (see Mauger:1968:242-244). The factors included in Table 2 are those which have selectional relevance to all passive forms whereas the additional factors which appear in Table 3 are those which have relevance in some passive sentences only.

It is perhaps necessary to comment on the use of the term "sequential references" in Table 1 instead of the term "time" or "tense". The term "tense" was rejected because it refers to the form of the verb in its whole distribution and is therefore inappropriate to the purpose. The conditional tense, for example, is only included in so far as it functions as part of the general system under analysis. Uses of the conditional to replace the present tense e.g. *je voudrais des tomates* etc., or in the conditional mood are excluded. Indeed it would perhaps be better to refer to the "futur du passé" than the "conditional" in the present context.

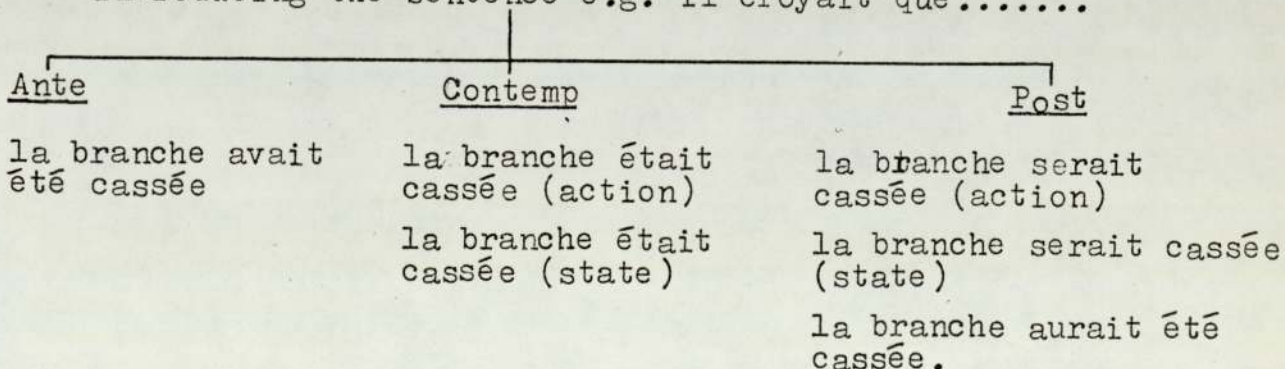
One aspect of the general system we are aiming to describe is the order in which events are presented as having happened. It is for this reason that the term sequential reference has been preferred to "time" which has an absolute quality. For similar reasons ante/contemporary/post have

been preferred to past/present/future. It has been necessary to divide "ante" into Level 2 and Level 1. Level 2 is earlier in the sequence than Level 1. The choice of two different "points de repère" is required to distinguish the distribution of the future from that of the conditional. The relationship between the two levels can be illustrated as follows, taking sentences of Passive Type 1 as examples. Sequential references.

(a) "Point de repère" - the moment of utterance of the sentence



(b) "Point de repère" - the past as defined by the expression introducing the sentence e.g. il croyait que.....



It should be noted that the "futur antérieur" and the "futur antérieur du passé"(often called the "conditionnel passé") are treated as post (future) accompli" as contrasted with the "futur" and the "futur du passé"(often called the "conditionnel") which are post-non accompli.

In Table 2 we note a basic distinction between Passive Type 1 which frequently indicates "state" and Passive Type 2 and 3 which do not. The distinction is not between "accompli/non accompli" as Dubois suggests (Dubois:1967:115) since all three passive types have "accompli" forms:

une branche était cassée	}	Type 1
une branche a été cassée		
une branche s'est cassée		Type 2
une branche a cassé		Type 3

Within each type of passive taken separately the factors included in Table 2 are sufficient to account for the selection of any item. Only in the case of the "passé composé" where it has past reference, and the "passé simple" is there identity of marks and these forms are, of course, in complementary distribution in the spoken and written codes.

There is, on the other hand, a correspondence of marks between certain items belonging to different types of passive. These items have been grouped and listed in Table 3 together with two more factors which may determine the distribution of the items in each group. The first of these is the possibility of realising an agentive complement. The second is the animate/inanimate nature of the subject. The results of the analysis are shown in the table.

The fact that only a relatively small number of verbs have a Passive Type 3 construction is an additional factor of selection.

If we stray into the semantic field we note that there is a tendency for Passive Type 2 to be used when the action is represented as non-specific in time:

le saumon se mange froid

ce vin se boit frais

cela ne se fait pas

This use is somewhat different from the use of Passive Type 1 to represent habitual action, where such action is presented as a series of present moments:

le feu est allumé chaque matin à sept heures.

It should be stressed that this distinction is not a reliable guide in all cases:

cela s'explique maintenant.

There remains a residue of cases, especially where Types 2 and 3 are involved, for which selection seems open:

cette branche s'est cassée

cette branche a cassé.

Chapter 3

Factors determining the selection of a passive sentence.

- A. An analysis of possible factors of selection
(p.109-122).
- B. An analysis of examples taken from the "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orléans".(p.123-137).

A. An analysis of possible factors of selection.

Writing on the subject of the passive Wandruszka points out that, contrary to common belief, the passive is not "un registre négligé". Newspapers, for example, use this voice a great deal:

un homme d'état est: attendu/regu/ salué/acclamé;
.....des personnes sont: tuées/blessées dans des accidents;....des voitures sont: volées, des voleurs sont arrêtés, des accusés sont condamnés ou acquittés etc, des mesures sont envisagées, discutées, critiquées, approuvées....(Wandruszka:1970:129-130).

What then, are the factors leading to the choice of the passive? A quotation from an illuminating article by Hupet and Costermans sets the problem in its proper perspective:

N' est-ce pas à première vue surprenant que la langue nous laisse libre de couler les mêmes mots en une telle variété de combinaisons? Par exemple: Son coiffeur l'a violée. Elle a été violée par son coiffeur. C'est son coiffeur qui l'a violée. En regard des principes d' économie caractérisant à tous niveaux les systèmes linguistiques, cette abondance d' expressions....a effectivement de quoi étonner (Hupet et Costermans :1976:3).

In this chapter we hope to show that the selection of the passive in preference to the active is not an arbitrary matter but is conditioned by a variety of linguistic factors.

Cohen suggests that the choice of active or passive is stylistic. He notes that the passive is often "remplacé par une phrase à sujet « on »" (Cohen:1966:262). This is

certainly possible when the agent can reasonably be represented by "on":

je suis observé

on m' observe.

It is necessary to add the condition that the passive sentence should not be "state" but should be "action". There is no serious attempt to explain why the active sentence with "on" should be preferred.

He goes on to write:

On peut observer de délicates nuances d' emploi entre les temps; ainsi «le malade a été opéré hier» ou «sera opéré demain» mais au présent « c'est en ce moment qu' on opère » ou que «le Docteur X opère le malade»
(Cohen:1966:262).

The crucial factor here, however, is not one of tense but of aspect. The passive of a perfective verb cannot usually be used for progressive aspect which is conveyed here by the use of "on" + active verb form.

Wagner and Pinchon also lay some stress on "stylistic" reasons for the selection of the passive. They recognise, however, that the passive is a marked form:

L'emploi de la voix passive est toujours motivé par une raison: raison de sens, raison de style.

The five "raisons", together with the examples which illustrate them, are as follows:

1. Le passif sert à opposer un verbe à lui-même; ou deux verbes de sens contraire:

J'aimais, j'étais aimé, et nos pères d'accord
(Corneille).

Il adore Emilie, il est adoré d'elle (Corneille).

On aime à deviner les autres, mais l'on n'aime pas à être deviné (La Bruyère).

Je me fâchai, je voulus me battre; c'était ce que les petits coquins demandaient. Je battis, je fus battu (J.-J.Rousseau).

Etre aimé plus qu' on aime est une des croix de la vie (H.de.Montherlant).

Si tu l'apprimes, tu seras châtié (G.Flaubert).

2. Le passif sert à mettre en relief une action envisagée du point de vue de celui qui la subit: Etre aimé de tout ce qui m'approchait était le plus vif de mes désirs (J.-J.Rousseau).

Monseigneur, lui dis-je, j'ai été arquebusé comme j'ai été pendu (Mérimée).

3. D' où l' emploi fréquent du passif impersonnel dans les phrases du type: il a été dit (prescrit) etc: Et la seconde fois, il me fut promis un tel accueil pour la troisième que je résolus de ne m'y pas exposer (J.-J.Rousseau).

Bourget aurait besoin qu' il lui soit répété le mot jeté à l'oreille de Daudet au commencement de sa carrière.....(E.de Goncourt).

4. Le passif sert à éviter l'emploi d'un sujet indéfini "on":

J'ai passé ma vie à être quitté (Cl.Mauriac).

(Comparer"*J'ai passé ma vie à ce qu' on me quitte", tour impossible).

5. Le passif est employé à la place de l'actif lorsque le sujet du verbe actif est un groupe de mots assez long:

Les gens de Hameln furent tourmentés par une multitude innombrable de rats qui venaient du Nord(P.Mérimée).

(Wagner et Pinchon:1962:231).

The reasons proposed for the use of the passive in point 1 are not convincing. Contrasting a verb with itself is not a specific function of the passive. A sentence including an affirmative and a negative or an interrogative might be equally contrastive.

Je l'aime mais il ne m' aime pas.

Je l'aime mais est-ce qu' il m' aime?

The contrast is part of the message; it is not the function of any particular grammatical construction. This can be seen even more clearly when we examine the second half of the assertion:

Le passif sert à opposer.....deux verbes de sens contraire.

One of the examples given is:

Si tu l'opprimes, tu seras châtié.

The verbs "opprimer" and "châtier" can surely not be described as "verbes de sens contraire"! The contrast lies not in the verbs but in the message. The real link between all of these examples and the use of the passive is the desire to present the "subject of discourse" (or "topic") (see Sapir: 1955:119) first as the agent then as the "recipient" of the action. The contrast lies in these alternating roles. We should also note the literary nature of all the examples; Corneille, La Bruyère and Montherlant being especially fond of dramatic contrasts for aesthetic effect. The examples are far removed from everyday French.

We see then that Wagner and Pinchon's first point is fundamentally the same as their second one:

Le passif sert à mettre en relief une action envisagée du point de vue de celui qui la subit.

The sentence taken from Mérimée illustrates this point quite effectively but the first example may be misleading. Much of the "relief" in this sentence is a function of the word order rather than the passive voice. If the sentence were remodelled to read:

Le plus vif de mes désirs était d'être aimé de
tout ce qui m'approchait,

the passive would still be employed but the emphasis of the original would be absent.

The third point, "l'emploi fréquent du passif impersonnel" is a development of the second. Once again, however, the emphasis ascribed to the use of the passive is a function of the word order. In the case of the first example the same "signifié" could be expressed without the emphasis by modifying the word order while retaining the passive:

Et la seconde fois, un tel accueil pour la
troisième me fut promis que je résolus de ne
m'y pas exposer.

Similarly the second sentence could be remodelled to read:

Bourget aurait besoin que le mot jeté à l'oreille
de Daudet au commencement de sa carrière lui soit
répété.

These examples suggest that an important reason for the choice of the impersonal construction may be the desire to avoid a subject consisting of a long sequence of words. The situation could then be summarised as follows:

The passive is chosen in order to present the "recipient" as the grammatical subject of the sentence but in the event of the subject being long enough to risk causing "noise"

a substitute subject is supplied, the real subject appearing later in the sentence. Point 3 is therefore linked to point 5 which asserts:

Le passif est employé à la place de l'actif lorsque le sujet du verbe actif est un groupe de mots assez long:.....

This seems a valid point which will be taken up later (see Chapter 3.p.117).

Point 4 suggests the following use of the passive:

Le passif sert à éviter l'emploi d'un sujet indéfini "on":

J'ai passé ma vie à être quitté (Cl.Mauriac).

(comparer "*J'ai passé ma vie à ce qu' on me quitte",tour impossible.

Although this point contains an element of truth it is too restrictive. The passive often serves to avoid the realisation of the agent whether this be a "sujet indéfini" or any other agent. The example itself seems ill-chosen. The expression "passer du temps" is always followed by a preposition + infinitive or noun. This is the reason why "on" is unacceptable in this case. The question of voice seems to be irrelevant.

Finally it must be noted that the authors never make clear what is meant by "raison de sens, raison de style".

Even more imprecise than Wagner and Pinchon, however, is the extreme psychological approach adopted by Vinay and Darbelnet when they compare the use of the passive in English and French:

La fréquence du passif..... s' explique aussi par une certaine objectivité anglaise qui se

plaît à constater un phénomène sans l'attribuer à une cause précise, ou qui ne mentionne la cause ou l'agent qu'accessoirement. On ne peut s'empêcher d'établir un rapport entre cette construction et la répugnance des Anglo-Saxons à formuler tout de suite un jugement ou même une opinion (Viney et Darbelnet:1958:136).

The following is the last of several examples given to back up this assertion:

The future of broadcasting cannot be foretold; and all its developments will no doubt be seized upon and used as eagerly for evil as for good (R.Bridges), for which the authors give the following translation:

On ne saurait prédire l'avenir de la radiodiffusion et l'humanité exploitera sans doute toutes ses possibilités avec autant d'ardeur pour le bien que pour le mal. (Vinay et Darbelnet:1958:136).

Whatever the reasons for the choice of the passive voice in the English version and the active voice in the French version and the more general tendency in French to use an active sentence introduced by "on" where English would use a passive sentence, it seems extravagant to resort to generalisations about national temperament.

An outstanding contribution to the understanding of the conditions leading to the use of the passive was made by Jean Dubois in "Grammaire structurale du français-le verbe" (Dubois:1967:84-103). His suggestions have formed the basis for an article by Hupet and Costermans in which they describe various psycholinguistic tests designed to determine the conditions leading to the use of the passive. Dubois'

achievement is the more impressive when one realises that almost all the findings of Hupet, Costermans and their research students are present either in fully developed form or in embryo in "Grammaire structurale du français - le verbe". Since the Hupet and Costermans article is much fuller, however, than Dubois on this point we shall use the former as the primary source in the discussion that follows.

The authors accept all four of Dubois' types of passive (être + p.p., symmetrical verbs, pronominal verbs, and intransitive verbs) as well as his structural definition of the passive. Then, after asserting that T.-G. theory makes the passive a transformation of the active, they discuss the question of markedness. In this respect the findings of T.-G. grammar and structural grammar coincide: the passive is a marked form when set alongside the active voice. The authors summarise the "notion de marque" as follows:

En bref, il apparaît que l'élément non marqué est plus fondamental, plus neutre, plus simple que l'élément marqué. (Hupet et Costermans:1976:10).

The concept of neutrality is illustrated by the use of adjectives. The sentence, "How good is that paper?" is neutral in the sense that the answer might equally include the word "good" or the word "bad". On the other hand the sentence "How bad is that paper?" implies that the paper is bad and limits the reply to the degree of badness. (Hupet et Costermans:1976 :9-10). The concept of markedness and neutrality is an important one. It is the neutrality of the active form that allows its polyvalence. It explains why it is even possible to use the active form to express a passive idea:

il subit une attaque.

Inherent in the concept is the principle that the marked form is always positively selected; there is always a reason for its selection.

The factors leading to the choice of the marked form in the case of the passive may be summarised as follows:

1. The desire to omit the agent either because it is unknown or obvious or prespecified. We might add "when the agent is irrelevant" to this list.
2. A singular subject is preferred to a plural one.
3. An animate subject is preferred to an inanimate one.
4. There is a need to "assurer la continuité du discours en garantissant la contiguïté contextuelle".

(a).....les sujets tendent à préserver la contiguïté du verbe et de l'adverbe, surtout lorsque ces derniers forment une entité sémantique étroitement soudée; ainsi, (30) serait préférable à (29):
(29) Le motocycliste évita la collision de justesse.
(30) La collision fut évitée de justesse par le motocycliste.

Point 4 might explain the preference for "le saumon se mange froid" over "on mange le saumon froid", which is ambiguous.

Point 4 also explains the sentence quoted by Wagner and Pinchon (see Chapter 3, p.114). The long agentive complement incorporates a relative expansion..If it became the subject of an active sentence, the relevant noun would be too distant from the verb for

the sentence to be readily acceptable.

- (b)le sujet grammatical d'une phrase est généralement choisi en vue d'assurer la cohésion de cette phrase et du contexte qui la précède, le référent étant placé en début de la phrase pour minimiser sa distance vis-à-vis du référent. Ceci peut entraîner le retournement de la phrase sous la forme d'une transformation passive.

Suggested examples are:

Son frère a adopté une orpheline

which is more acceptable than:

Une orpheline a été adoptée par son frère.

However, the sentence:

Cette eau de toilette m' a été conseillée par la voisine

is more acceptable, despite its inanimate subject, than:

La voisine m' a conseillé cette eau de toilette.

5. New information is introduced towards the end of the sentence. The subject represents the "donné" the "presupposed" part of the sentence. This point clearly reinforces point 4(b). Hupet and Costermans cite Chomsky's examples:

(38) Did John give the book to Bill?

to which the answer would be of the type:

(38¹) No, to someone else.

and:

(39) Did John give Bill the book?

to which the reply would be of the type:

(39¹) No, something else. (for points 1-5 see Hupet et Costermans 1976:13-19).

The passive is a particular instance of this general principle. The constituents of an active sentence are much less clearly felt to be either presupposed or new information than they are in a passive sentence. This is what one would expect when contrasting an unmarked with a marked form. This asymmetry can be felt in a comparison of the following two sentences:

(a) le chat a tué le rat (active)

(b) le rat a été tué par le chat (passive).

In the case of (b) it is clear that something is being said about "le rat" which is the "donné" in the sentence. In the case of (a) it is not clear whether the sentence is telling us something new about "le chat" or "le rat" or even the process "a tué". In the case of passive sentences the agent when expressed is the most important semantic element. Two factors combine to make this so:

- (1) The position of the agentive complement in the sentence.
- (2) The fact that the agent is not normally expressed in the passive sentence.

Hupet and Costermans consider the factor of presupposition to be the most significant one in triggering the passive (Hupet et Costermans:1976:24).

The importance they give to contextual factors leads the authors to question the T.-G. contention that "les formes plus complexes soient générées en passant par les formes simples" (Hupet et Costermans:1976:25). They tend towards a much more structuralist conclusion:

On est au moins aussi fondé de croire que le sujet grammatical, évoqué par le contexte, est posé d'emblée, et que, selon qu'il s'agit du sujet ou de l'objet de l'action, le locuteur se trouve engagé, de fait, dans une construction active ou passive (Hupet et Costermans:1976:25).

This position implies a left to right chain of causality at surface level.

The authors are indebted to Dubois not only for the points summarised under 1, 2, 3, 4(b) but also for the conclusion just discussed. Dubois asserts:

La transformation passive dans le cas du référent entre dans un système de précorrection d'erreurs, de levée d'ambiguïté par un contrôle antécédent (Dubois:1967:100).

Dubois deals in rather more detail than Hupet and Costermans with the question of the relative importance of the factors he has outlined:

1. Lorsque deux ou plus de deux facteurs jouent conjointement, la probabilité de rencontrer le passif augmente.
2. En sens inverse, lorsque deux ou plusieurs facteurs jouent pour maintenir la phrase active, la transformation passive aboutit à des énoncés plus ou moins grammaticaux (Dubois:1967:98).

It is interesting to note that Dubois is, in effect, giving a criterion for judging degrees of grammaticality, although this is usually claimed as one of the advantages enjoyed by T.-G. grammar over structuralist grammar. One of the examples given by Dubois of a sentence which is close to being unacceptable is:

Des bê^htises ont été commises par un enfant

(Dubois:1967:100).

In this sentence "des" is not referential, "bê^htises" is plural and inanimate while the agentive complement noun is singular and animate.

Dubois adds the further observation:

Lorsque deux ou plusieurs règles agissent contradictoirement, elles se disposent alors selon une certaine hiérarchie. Dans la phrase minimale les deux facteurs les plus importants sont le caractère de non-achèvement et la présence d'un référent (Dubois:1967:100).

Where a referent is present in the relevant noun phrase the passive will probably occur even though it is necessary to express the "complément" d'agent":

Autrement dit, quand joue la règle du référent la transformation qui se produit est celle d'une phrase achevée active en une phrase achevée passive" (Dubois:1967:89).

We note then once again that the speaker is committed to a passive sentence by the preceding context.

Dubois goes on to examine the position of his other rules in the hierarchy:

Des deux règles d'ordre animé → non animé et singulier → pluriel, la seconde est plus contraignante quand le verbe actif admet d'une manière usuelle un animé ou un non-animé comme complément d'objet. Au contraire, si le verbe n'admet que des syntagmes animés comme compléments d'objet, il est le plus souvent utilisé au passif et la règle d'ordre animé → non-animé.

l' emporte alors sur la règle singulier→pluriel
(Dubois:1967:100).

- B. An analysis of examples taken from the "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orléans."

It remains now to examine all these factors in the light of examples drawn from "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orléans" (interview 001). In this interview there are approximately eighty examples of the passive as defined by Dubois and Hupet and Costermans. The passive occurs in the proportion of 1:10 in the total of verb phrases. This is rather at variance with Dubois' suggested proportion of 1:4 (Dubois:1967:85). Such a statistic is perhaps less significant than it seems since it turns largely on the interpretation given to such frequent phrases as "C'est des gens qui " c'est vrai que.....". All of these locutions being intransitive are considered as passive by Dubois. We should add, also, that absolute numerical precision is impossible because some sentences are restarted.

Since the definition of the passive in this study is somewhat different from that of Dubois we shall not include intransitive verbs for discussion nor shall we discuss pronominal verbs unless they are passive by our definition.

Passive Type 1.

The examples of passive type 1 (être +.p.p.) are as follows:

- | | <u>Transcript</u>
<u>page</u> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. puisque c'est mes parents que - (en) fin c'est ma mère <u>mon père a été tué</u> à la guerre de quatorze | 3 |
| 2. je parle de mon métier-là que: évidemment c'est c'est mon rôle(n'est-ce) pas <u>-nous sommes considérés</u> ici comme déjà..... | 6 |

3. il me manquait un commis j' ai été
un mois dans avant d'en trouver un -
et j' étais forcé à en d' en d' em-
baucher un gars. 22
4. dans le cheval il faut il faut dénerver
davantage - euh pratiquement euh- - à
soixante pour cent soixante - cinq pour
cent le cheval est vendu soit en biftek
soixante - dix pour cent.... 22
5. nous avons les braisés nous avons:les ragou^{ts}
- euh qui ne: ne sont pas prisés par le
Français dans le cheval 23
6. on va vers une technocracie euh - les:les
les tous nos nos grosses têtes tous nos cer-
veaux sont enfermés dans leur tour d'ivoire
(n' est-ce) pas et décident.... 24
7. et puis quand même les heures sont régentées
...on arrive à faire cinquante-quatre heures 27
8. moi je me plains pas de la municipalité évi-
demment euh on peut toujours faire mieux -
on peut toujours faire mieux m' enfin il faut
reconnaître que notre ville a été sinistré (sic)
à combien à soixante pour cent peut-être 31
9. j' ai entendu l' autre jour une causerie -
justement sur l' Orléanais - qui était déb-
attue entre Maurice Genevoix - euh Secrétain
et le prof. recteur Antoine 35

10. à mon avis les extrêmes les extrêmes
mengaient la: la danse - alors là j' ai
vu que: le la majorité était embarquée 37
11. dans une affaire que: qui n' était pas 37
prévue au départ certainement euh: par les
pondérés par les: les gens qui voulaient
continuer d' étudier dans les meilleurs con-
ditions (n'est-ce) pas
12. mais qui étaient amenés justement par toute
cette bande de meneurs..... 37
13. ils viennent à Orléans y a aucun moyen de
locomotion ou presque - comprenez-vous -alors
et ils sont casernés ils ont l' impression d'
être encasernés 39
14. vous savez Orléans n'est pas tellement indus-
trialisée 40
15. ou même peut-être aussi faut le reconnaître
peut-être l'ouvrier qui:est exploité aussi
hein y en a malheureusement 42
16. on peut dire que les trois quarts des: des
des ouvriers maintenant hein- viennent-sont
bien habillés euh..... 42
17. vous avez des: des gens qui s' expriment aussi
bien: chez un ouvrier quand c' est ils possèdent
bien leur sujet évidemment c'est peut - être pas
aussi châtié que quand c' est un intellectuel 52
18. Madame Cannone Madame Assone ce sont là:
justement la: la femme qui est mariée avec un:
colonel - américain - française d' ailleurs 54

19. y a trente ans que je suis établi 55
20. on leur reproche quelques coq-à-l'âne
mais remarquez que moi je: je ne suis
pas-assez ferré dans notre langue pour
pouvoir..... 56
21. j' ai l'impression qu elle est mieux 57
22. enseignée hein c'est plus condensé que
lorsque j' allais à l'école.... 57
23. je crois que les études ont été plus poussées 57
24. vous comprenez- j' ai négligé - alors ma
femme était forcée d' écrire (see also sentence
No.3.) 63

Of these examples nineteen have no expressed agentive complement thus tending to confirm "non-achèvement" as a major factor leading to the use of the passive. Five examples, all of them relative expansions, are "achevés". One relative expansion is "non-achevé". In examples 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 19, 20, for various reasons no agent is available which could act as the subject of an active sentence.

In the case of 6, 10, 16, 19 all the verbs are capable of being used in active sentences:

on enferme les prisonniers

on embarque les passagers

on habille les enfants

on établit un gouvernement

but in these particular instances it is clear that NP₁ and NP₂ (the underlying agentive complement) have the same referent and that these Type 1 passive forms are derived from pronominal verbs.

If then there is an active alternative to sentences 6, 10, 16, 19 it would need to be a sentence using a pronominal verb:

6(a) tous nos cerveaux se sont enfermés dans leur tour d'ivoire.

6(b) tous nos cerveaux s'enferment dans leur tour d'ivoire.

Sentence 6 has present reference, is "accompli" and "state".

Sentence 6(a) has past or present reference, is "accompli" and "is action".

Sentence 6(b) has present reference, is "non-accompli" and is "action"

We see then that 6(a) and 6(b) are not adequate substitutes for 6. The same situation applies to sentences 10 and 19.

In the case of sentence 16, however, the pronominal form could be substituted and the "signifié" maintained.

16(a)....des ouvriers s'habillent

This sentence like 16 has present reference is "non-accompli" and is "action".

Turning now to sentences 7, 8 and 20 we note that the past participles have become lexicalised as adjectives with a distribution different from that of their associated verbs. An active transformation in such cases, even if it were possible, would distort the "signifié" of the sentence.

Turning now to the examples in which an agent could be introduced to form the subject of the active transformation we find that it would in most cases convey little information. Active sentences based on sentences 2, 4, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23

would probably have "on" as their subject. Similarly Nos 3 and 24 would probably have "ça" as their subject. An agentive complement such as "par les allemands" added to sentence 1 would clearly have been informative but would have introduced an element into the sentence which the speaker presumably felt to be irrelevant. An active transformation of this sentence with "les allemands" as the subject would clearly have altered the "topic". An active transformation of sentence 17 would make the workman rather than his powers of self-expression the "topic".

It seems, then, that the agent is omitted for contrary reasons: either because it would contribute no information or because it would contribute distracting information. It follows that where the agent is expressed in a passive sentence it tends to carry new information which is felt to be highly important.

Turning next to the question of the preference for animate as opposed to inanimate subjects and leaving aside for a moment the relative expansions, we note that of the ten examples where an active form was possible five have animate subjects in the passive (nos.1, 2, 3, 13, 24) and five have inanimate subjects (nos 4, 14, 21, 22, 23). Seven sentences have the preferred singular subjects (nos 1, 3, 4, 14, 21, 22, 24) as against three with plural subjects (nos 2, 13, 23)

It remains to be seen whether the high proportion of inanimate subjects can be accounted for by the rule that sets out the conditions in which preference for an animate subject is outweighed by the preference for a singular one. (see Chapter 3.p.121). The combinatorial possibilities in

which the two systems (Animate/Inanimate, Singular/Plural) are in conflict are as follows:

$NP_1 + V(\text{passive}) + NP_2$

- (a) animate plural + V(passive) + inanimate singular
- (b) inanimate singular + V(passive) + animate plural

None of the other possible combinations brings the systems into conflict. An animate singular subject is the optimum combination taking preference over all other possible types of subjects. An inanimate singular subject obviously takes precedence over a inanimate plural subject which is the least preferred of all possible combinations.

Sentences 1, 3, 24 have animate singular subjects so the conflict of systems does not arise.

Sentences 2, 13 both have animate plural subjects when the active alternative sentence would have provided animate singular subjects. This goes counter to Dubois' general prediction.

Sentences 4, 14, 21, 22 all have inanimate singular subjects (by inanimate we mean non-human in this context) whereas the active alternative would have given animate singular subjects. This also runs counter to Dubois' rule.

Sentence 23 also conflicts with Dubois since it has an inanimate plural subject where the probable active alternative would have given an animate singular subject.

Of the six relative expansions four have expressed agentive complements (nos 5, 9, 11, 12) and two have no expressed agentive complements (nos 15, 18).

Sentences 11, 15, 18 all have the most preferred subject, animate singular.

Sentence 12 has an animate plural subject when the

subject of the alternative active sentence would have been animate singular.

Sentence 5 has an inanimate plural subject which would have been replaced by an animate singular subject in the corresponding active sentence.

Sentence 9 shows the two systems in conflict; it is of type (b). Since the verb may have either an animate or inanimate complement in an active sentence, this sentence conforms to Dubois' rule. In this circumstance an inanimate singular subject is preferred to an animate plural one.

We may note that the object complements in nos.9 and 12 are long and therefore would not be favoured as subjects of an active counterpart sentence.

It seems then that we must account for the presence of so many inanimate subjects by falling back on the two hierarchically superior factors of "non-achèvement" and "la présence d' un référent" (see Chapter 3.p.121).

The absence of the agent in most of these examples shows that this was the major consideration but an examination of the contexts shows that the contextual factors of "distanciation minimale" and "présupposition" may have played a role, and indeed were the critical factors in the case of the relative expansions, particularly those with an agentive complement.

The two contextual factors of "distanciation minimale" and "présupposition" are treated independently by Hupet and Costermans but may, in fact, be related, the latter being the equivalent (at semantic level) to the former which operates at a grammatical level. Their relationship can be demonstrated by means of a simple diagram:

<u>Context</u>	<u>Sentence under analysis</u>
Semantic plane: semantic antecedent	topic (presupposition) + comment (new information)
Grammatical plane: grammatical antecedent	subject (N.P.) + verb phrase
Example: Derrière la porte je vois <u>un rat</u> Semantic antecedent and grammatical antecedent	Il/est saisi par le chat comment/verb phrase

An item is the topic because it has been established as such by the preceding context.

As in the example in the diagram there may be a specific N.P. which establishes an item as the topic of the next sentence. On other occasions, however, the topic is established from the general preceding context.

The specific or non-specific factors in the context which establish the topic are referred to in the diagram by the term "semantic antecedent".

These factors correspond to the grammatical antecedent which often establishes the subject of the sentence in accordance with the role of "distanciation minimale".

Returning now to the sentences from the Étude sociolinguistique sur Orléans we note that in the case of sentences 21, 22, 23 there is no grammatical antecedent but the topics are established by the general context of the discussion on the education syllabus.

In the case of relative expansions, on the other hand, the sentence form ensures that there is a precise antecedent

corresponding to the topic. Dubois' analysis of the process leading to the choice of a passive in a relative expansion is as follows:

Stage 1 (L'ambassadeur) (a présenté) (ses lettres de créance): (l'attaché culturel) (l') (accompagnait).

Stage 2 Relativisation,
L'ambassadeur, que l'attaché culturel accompagnait, a présenté ses lettres de créance.

The ambiguity introduced by the intercalation of a relative expansion whose word order is very like that of a main sentence can be removed by reversing the positions of the subject and verb syntagma in the relative expansion, so as to produce a characteristic relative syntactic form:

Stage 3 Reversal of Subject and Verb Syntagma.
L'ambassadeur, qu'accompagnait l'attaché culturel, a présenté ses lettres de créance.

Finally the passive transformation restores the 'ordre canonique' of the syntagmas: subject → verb → complement

Stage 4 Passive transformation.
L'ambassadeur, qui était accompagné de l'attaché culturel, a présenté ses lettres de créance.

Turning to the examples found in the interview we note that, with the exception of sentence 15 the relative clause is an expansion not of the subject but of the object of the verb and that, therefore, the ambiguity introduced at Stage 2 scarcely applies. In the case of example No.15 also it cannot be applicable since the verb to which the subject gives

its mark is so deferred that interference by the relative expansion is hardly plausible.

Nonetheless Dubois' analysis in modified form can be applied to these examples:

Sentence No.5

Stage 1. Nous avons les ragoûts: le Français ne prise pas les ragoûts.

Stage 2. Nous avons les ragoûts que le Français ne prise pas

Stage 3. Nous avons les ragoûts que ne prise pas le Français.

Stage 4. Nous avons les ragoûts qui ne sont pas prisés par le Français.

The advantage of the passive form is that it allows an expansion of 'ragoûts' without the disturbing presence of another subject in the relative expansion which might threaten to dominate the sentence and thus confuse the message which is concerned primarily with 'ragoûts'. This advantage outweighs the greater cost of a passive sentence even though it is a 'phrase achevée' and even though the subject is inanimate plural when "le Français" would provide the preferred animate singular subject.

No.9

Stage 1. j'ai entendu l'autre jour une causerie: Maurice Genevoix, Secrétain et le prof. Antoine débattaient la causerie.

Stage 2. j'ai entendu l'autre jour une causerie que Maurice Genevoix, Secrétain et le prof. Antoine débattaient.

Stage 3. j' ai entendu l' autre jour une causerie que débattaient Maurice Genevoix, Secrétaire et le prof. Antoine.

Stage 4. j'ai entendu l'autre jour une causerie qui était débattue entre Maurice Genevoix, Secrétaire et le prof. Antoine.

The process of transformation is therefore the same as in sentence 5.

It is interesting to note that the speaker prefers the "non-accompli" form "était débattue" to the "accompli" form "a été débattue".

No.11 resembles sentences 5 and 9 in the transformations but is interesting in that it gives direct if inconclusive evidence of Dubois' contention that "La transformation passive....conduit à poser l'hypothèse de l'existence chez le locuteur de modèles de contrôle antécédent, précorrecteur d'erreurs, c'est-à-dire d'un projet de phrase". (Dubois:1967: 125). In the sentence '.....la majorité était embarquée dans une affaire - que: - qui n' était pas prévue..... the shift from 'que' to 'qui' implies a decision to change from an active to a passive construction.

No.12 can be subjected to the same form of analysis as sentence 9.

No.15 is a 'phrase non-achevée' an additional reason for the choice of the passive. An active alternative in that context would have been:

l'ouvrier qu' on exploite.

The desire to avoid the introduction of another subject into the sentence may have dictated the choice of the passive. However the active form is almost as acceptable since the

subject "on" is the minimum realisation of an animate subject and therefore introduces the minimum of interference.

Sentence 18 can be compared to sentence 5 for the purpose of analysis but, in addition, is "non-achevé" since "avec un colonel américain" is not an agentive complement. Dubois points out that the passive transformation can be reduced to the form of a participle in such sentences as:

L'accord, approuvé par les deux partis, est
entré en vigueur.

He claims:

Cette réduction de la phrase relativisée est la
forme la plus courante du passif (Dubois:1967:98).

In fact interview 001 contains no examples of this contraction.

In conclusion we can say that reference and presupposition are the principal factors determining the choice of the passive in the relative expansions.

Passive Type 2

There are seven examples of the pronominal verb form of the passive in interview 001:

Transcript page

1. y a aussi l' attrait de l'achat qui se
malheureusement aussi s'amenuise de plus
en plus. 12
2. j' achète mes animaux vivants - donc il
faut que j'estime.. la qualité.. (n'est-ce)
pas - l' âge évidemment (n'est-ce) pas le
poids.. et alors après euh l'abbatage se fait
quoi alors c' est encore un abbatage artisanal
qui va se - lui aussi

3. évidemment s'éliminer tout doucement... 12
4. on appelle ça les approches....ça s'appelle
les approches 13
5. on a un métier qui se perd..... 21
6. je me suis dit y a quelque chose de valable -
certainement - on peut pas m. - un mouvement
comme ça ne peut pas se déclencher - avec cette
rapidité si..... 37
7. je crois que ça se reflète dans toutes les
classes de la société. 40

"Non-achèvement" is even more a characteristic of the pronominal passive than it is of the "être" + p.p. form of passive. "Distanciation minimale" and "présupposition" account for the use of the passive in the case of sentences 1, 3, 5 (all relative expansions) and sentence 7. Sentence 2 shows the "topic" changing from the personal to the impersonal and general. There may be a psychological reason for this. The interviewee, a butcher, is sensitive to the common feeling that there is something brutal about his trade. (see transcript. p.13) He might therefore prefer to use the pronominal verb in order to impersonalise the actual process of killing an animal.

Sentence 4 shows by its very form that, in this instance, the pronominal verb form and "on" + verb are semantically very close.

Sentence 6 shows the use of the pronominal verb form to suggest that a process takes place spontaneously. The subject is presented as if it were the agent. The tension that arises between this fact and the fact that we know that the

subject cannot be the real agent results in the feeling that the process is agentless. "Non-achèvement" then is clearly the reason for the use of the pronominal passive in this case.

The examination of examples from the "Etude sociolinguistique sur Orleans" confirms the relevance of the suggestions of Dubois and Hupet and Costermans, although a very much larger sample would need to be used if a statistical study was to be made.

Conclusion

In the course of this study we have aimed to cover the main features of the passive both by commenting on existing work in the field and making some modest suggestions of our own.

The analysis of voice into active, passive and neutral and the related work on the agentive complement, together with the work on aspect and the distribution of the three types of passive, may perhaps prove of some use as contributions to the continuing debate.

It is hoped, at least, that the study as a whole will provide the student of French with some insights into the passive.

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