Mentional references and familiarity break

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The main concern of this paper is the proper analysis of the NP *celui-ci* in French. The contribution of L. Tasmowski to this discussion is well known (Tasmowski 1990). In my view, this contribution makes two important points:
1) in its anaphoric uses, *celui-ci* cannot be analysed as a "nominal anaphoric" along the lines suggested by Corblin (1985, 1990) for its exophoric uses. This point is also made in Kleiber (1991), Zribi-Hertz (1991), Imoto (1997);
2) eventhough *celui-ci* like pronouns and definite NPS must be linked in its anaphoric uses to a familiar discourse referent, it involves "une rupture de familiarité" [a familiarity break] (Tasmowski 1990 : 377).

Basically, I will argue in this paper that these two points are correct, although they seem to draw the analysis of *celui-ci* in two opposite directions and look somewhat paradoxical. Some authors (e.g. Zribi-Hertz (1991)) infer from the first point that *celui-ci* (at least in its anaphoric uses) is not a NP without a noun, but a pronoun. But some others (Imoto (1997)) have argued that it cannot be true that *celui-ci* has two unrelated uses, one as a NP without a noun, and the other one as a pronoun. Morevoer, the second point made by Tamowski sounds paradoxical in itself (how could a co-indexed occurrence of a NP imply a break in the continuity of the discourse?) and even more paradoxical if one wants to see *celui-ci* as a pronoun, since pronouns are usually associated with topic continuity, and analysed in terms of familiarity (Heim 1982).

In this paper, I propose a solution to those difficulties which is based on the analysis of *celui-ci* as a "mentional NP". Other mentional NPs in French are, for instance, *le premier, le second, ce dernier.* Mentional NPS, it will be claimed, are just NPs which are associated to a previously established discourse referent by using only the properties of the previous *mention* having evoked this discourse referent in the discourse context. I will claim that there is a strong association between mentionals and NPs without a

noun in French, namely that mentional references are achieved by NPs without a noun.

I will show moreover that this specific kind of reference based on contingent properties of a discourse referent (the fact that it has been mentioned in such and such a way) is the key for understanding how a co-indexed NP produces the break in topic continuity noted by Tasmowski?

1. Anaphoric *celui-ci* is not a nominal anaphoric.

In Corblin (1990, 1995) I proposed to draw a line between true pronouns and NPs deprived of their lexical head (henceforth NWNs).

One distinctive property of DWNs is that most they often accept a right dislocation with *de.*

(1) Il m'en a cité deux, de livres de linguistique

[He-mentioned me-two-of books of linguistics]

They do so most often when the missing head noun can be recovered from the discourse context or from the situation. *Celui-ci* can be used in that way, and this is one of the reasons why it should be considered as a DWN.

(2) Donnez-moi celui-ci, de livre

[Give-me-this one-of book]

But, as argued among others by Kleiber (1991), Tasmowski (1991), Zribi-Hertz (1990), there are discourse contexts like (3) in which the anaphoric *celui-ci* does not license a "de" dislocation.

(3) Pierre a demandé à Jean de l'aider, mais celui-ci a refusé

[Peter asked John to help him, but the later refused]

One might suspect here that the right dislocation is ruled out because the context provides a proper name (*Jean*), and not a lexical noun, which would be an admissible head for the DWN (*ce Jean-ci?*). But there are nevertheless many other examples in which a lexical noun cannot be dislocated with "celui-ci".

(4) Et c'est ainsi qu'il perdit l'estime de sa logeuse. Car celle-ci lui ayant chaleureusement vanté les mérites de la prophétie de sainte Odile, le prêtre lui avait marqué une très légère impatience, due sans doute à sa lassitude (...) Camus, *La peste.*

Tasmowski (1990)

(5) Les chimpanzés sont plus affectueux que les chats, même si ceux-ci sont plus doux.   (Kleiber 1991: 135)

In such cases, a restitution of the antecedent N (*cette logeuse-ci*, *ces chats-ci*) would not preserve the interpretation, and a "de dislocation would be very weird. As Imoto (1997) observes, both would be associated, as usual for full demonstrative NPs followed by *-ci* , to what is called in Corblin (1987) an "internal contrast": *Ces chats-ci sont plus doux*, can only be natural in discourse if the speaker contrasts a subclass of cats to other cats. But *ceux-ci* in (5) does not imply such a contrast.

The least we can say, considering those anaphoric uses of *celui-ci* is that, although we might perhaps continue to see them as DWNs, they do not trigger any nominal anaphor (i.e. the interpretation as the lexical head of a missing head NP of a noun taken in the context).

2. Anaphoric *celui-ci* as a mentional.

There are other NPs having the external form of a DWN which share the properties mentioned in (1) for *celui-ci.* In some of their occurrences, they are true anaphoric nominal DWNs, but in some others, they are not (i.e. they do not allow the restitution of a contextually salient noun as their head, and they do not allow a "de" dislocation.)

(6)Plusieurs candidats se présentèrent pour cet emploi. Le premier candidat ne fut gère convaincant, le suivant non plus. Seul le dernier trouva grâce aux yeux de la commission.

[Many candidates applied for this position. The first candidate was not very convincing, and neither was the next one. The last one only pleased the commission]

In this example, many DWNs are or could be used: *le premier, le suivant, le dernier.* All those DWNs are based on ordinal adjectives, which state the rank of their referent in some temporal series. In (6), it is clear that what

is ranked are candidates, and that they are ranked according to their location in some temporal succession, maybe according to the order of their audition by the committee

But there is also a "metalinguistic" interpretation of those DWNs, as in (7):

> (7)On reçut le candidat local et une candidate de l'extérieur.
> Le premier recueillit évidemment tous les suffrages.

> [The local candidate was interviewed first, and then a
> [female] candidate from the outside. The former, of course,
> got the most votes]

In (7) *le premier* means something like "the individual which was mentioned in the **first** position in the previous sentence". Note that the restitution of previously used nominals is impossible and would lead to paradoxes. In this case, we cannot say "le premier candidat local", just because in (7) this man is the only local candidate, the other one being neither "un candidat" (she is a woman), nor a local candidate (she is from the outside).

This use has two interesting properties:
1. the NP is associated with a previously established discourse referent (DR) on the basis of the relative positions of contextual mentions;
2. the NP is associated with a DR, but this mention is achieved without using any specific nominal content.

The **first** property implies that only DWNs using spatial or ordinal modifiers will have this specific use. In fact only DWNs like *le premier*, *le second*, *ce dernier,* and in my view*celui-ci,* are to be considered.[1]
I think that the second property is established by the convergent observations of Tasmowski, Kleiber, Zribi-Hertz and Imoto. The reason why the restitution of the nominal content extracted from the NP antecedent does not preserve the interpretation or is ruled out is that those references do not use any nominal content for the representation of their referent.

I will call those references *mentional references*, and I will focus on the properties of those special references in French.

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[1] For a much more detailed survey of the relevant set see Berrendonner et Reichler-Béguelin (1996).

The notion of mentional reference is delimited by the following assumptions.

1. A previously established DR is reached by means of (contingent) properties of the last mention of this DR in the discourse. Those properties are said to be *contingent* because they are not properties of the object itself, but properties of a mention of this object, relative to the form and position of this mention in the discourse. In French, information about gender (arbitrary) and relative order of the mentions is typically used. *la première* can only refer to the DR associated to a previous feminine NP, which is in first position in the order of the last contextual mentions (the gender of the other mentions is indifferent).

(8) La pièce est parue avant le roman. Je préfère la première au second.

[The play was published before the novel. I prefer the former+feminine to the latter+masculine]

2. The antecedent is reached only by means of contingent properties of the associated mention. Hence this NP cannot have a nominal content specifying the sort to which it belongs. It follows that in French, typical mentional NPs will be NPs deprived of a lexical head, i.e. DWNs. I will not discuss here the possibility that mentionals could be pronouns, since the assumption that mentional reference is a specific use of a subset of DWNs seems to be sufficient in French.

3. Typical candidates for a mentional use are DWNs including modifiers able to refer to the relative order of mentions in the discourse. This covers ordinal modifiers (*premier, dernier, second,* etc.) and demonstrative ones (*ci* in *celui-ci*). I will not discuss here in detail the co-occurrence restrictions modifier/determiner on mentionals.

4. "Mentional" qualifies a specific interpretation of a DWN, which means that in some contexts, a given DWN can be ambiguous. Consider for instance (9):

(9) Le comité entendit successivement un candidat de l'extérieur et un candidat local. Le premier fit une forte impression.

[The committee first heard a candidate from the outside and then a local one. The former made a favorable impression]

In (9), I think that one can understand *le premier* as a nominal anaphor DWN, meaning *le premier candidat*, and allowing a "de" dislocation (*le premier, de candidat...*). But one can also understand *le premier* as a

mentional, with the meaning *the first mentionedindividual in the previous sentence.*

3. Mentional references vs individual reference

A brief discussion might be in order here to clarify the contrast between those two references to the same individual illustrated by the two interpretations of *le premier* in (9).

In the framework of discourse representation theory (Kamp and Reyle 1993), or file change semantics (Heim 1982), one can contrast two kinds of information about discourse representation.

1) a discourse representation is a set of discourse markers, or discourse referents (DR), together with constraints on those DRs: the discourse gives information about the properties a given individual must satisfy in order to be referred to by a RD. Those properties are expressed by nouns, adjective, verbs of the language. So, in a simple example like *a man came in* , the discourse representation contains a DR belonging to the sort *man* and satisfies the predicate *came in.*

2) a discourse is also an event: it is made of linguistic expressions uttered in a certain order. Those expressions are precisely the trigger which makes the discourse representation introduced in (1) what it is. This means that a discourse representation, in a technical sense, should embody those two kinds of co-indexed informations: for instance the fact that the DR *a* (of the sort *man)* has been introduced in the discourse representation by means of a NP, having such and such properties, uttered in the previous sentence, etc... Note that a part of this information must be kept in any theory which purports to do anaphora resolution: in order to resolve a pronoun in French, you must have access to the grammatical arbitrary gender of the previous NPs, and to their relative proximity to the pronoun.

The main assumption of this paper is that mentional reference has *only* access to the second kind of information (discourse information). A schematic view of the process of mentional reference is as follows.

(10) [(x)NPi........(y)NPj] *le premier*

The information accessible to *le premier* is a list of mentions (provided by the context, say the previous clause). Mentions are linguistic objects (having linguistic attributes, e.g. category, number, gender), with their relative positions. The notation *x* and *y* is used for the DR respectively associated with those NPs. Mentional reference, is just the subsitution of (10) for (9):

(11) [(x)NPi........(y)NPj] (=x) NP*le premier*

This means that *le premier* will be associated with the same DR than *NPi*
.

It might be useful to stress some characteristics of this process:

1. It has only access to a short term memory of the discourse (in general, no more than the previous clause);

2. It is completely independent of any property of any individual mentioned in the discourse. The sort of the individual mentioned by the antecedent plays no role and has not to be known: whateverer it is, this DR will be associated with the mentional NP;

3. The resolution process is considerably more deterministic than the resolution of pronouns for instance, because it is strictly based on the relative positions of mentions.

In contrast, the use of the DWN in (9) as a nominal anaphoric is not independent of the properties of the described individual. Its sort (*candidate*) is used in the referential process: we have to find the first candidate in some serie (which can be a serie of events of the described world, not necessarily a serie of mentions of the discourse context). It is then even possible that a nominal anaphor be the first mention of an individual in the discourse, as in (12):

(12) Il y avait plusieurs candidats. Le premier fut excellent

[There was several candidates. The first was excellent]

Because we no longer have the mentions of the context as an exclusive guide-line for finding the antecedent among the contextual mentions, as for non mentional DWNs, we have to use in the resolution process the whole set of inference mechanism (conversational maxims, rhetorical structures of the discourse, topic or focus, etc...).

How could we state precisely the difference between mentional reference and the paradigmatic case of anaphoric reference, e.g. pronominal anaphora?

It would be impossible to sustain that pronouns do not have access to discourse information: in French for instance, we have to stipulate that *il* must be associated with a DR mentioned in the close discourse context by means of a masculine singular NP. The only exceptions to this rule are provided by exophoric uses in which the situation itself had to provide a salient DR which is known as "normally" mentioned by means of a masculine singular NP (see Tasmowski and Verluyten 1982). The importance of this exception can be diversely appreciated and I do not want to go into the discussion here. I do not find uninteresting that information about an individual (how it should be mentioned) can license

the use of pronouns (since no similar "direct licensing" exists for true mentionals).

It will be enough to say that discourse information is never more than a necessary condition for a correct use of a pronoun. What it means is that information relative to the sort of individuals mentioned in the context, about rhetorical structure of discourse, about focus, is typically needed in order to correctly resolve a pronoun.

Conversely, mentional reference is distinguished by the fact that it can be completely described and handled at the level of mentions. Anaphora resolution can take place without knowing anything about the individuals described, and even about the semantics of the previous sentence, the aim of the discourse, and so on.

4. The use of mentionals in discourse

The notion of mentional reference may help to understand the observation made by Tasmowski that mentionals like *celui-ci* are typically associated to a familiarity break.

First of all, it must be said that the status of mentionals in the construction of the discourse is a difficult and controversial question.

A first thing to note is that mentionals are rather rare in real discourse, even in written discourse, although, as stressed by Charolles (1996), they have the great advantage of not being ambiguous. This is a point a theory of mentional references vs pronominal references should help to explain.

There are some proposals in the literature about the specific role of (some of) the mentional NPs. Zribi-Hertz (1991), who analyses *celui-ci* in its mentional uses as "une sorte de pronom personnel" (1991: 571), makes the following claim:

> (13) Contrainte de promotion discursive
>
> *celui-ci* doit avoir un degré d'empathie plus élevé que son
>
> antécédent

She notes that this idea of "discursive promotion" is also present in Kleiber's analysis of *celui-ci*, and to some extent in Tasmowski's (1990). A technical discussion of the notion of empathy is far beyond the scope of this paper, and I would like to keep only this intuitive idea of "discursive promotion" that Zribi-hertz herself takes as correct.

In fact, I do not think that there is any theoretical or empirical argument in favour of this proposition. If it were true, we should expect, at first, a rather widespread use of *celui-ci* in any kind of discourse (spoken or written), the need for promoting a discourse topic being very common. But this is not what we get: anaphoric *celui-ci* is very rare in

conversation, its use in written discourse is mastered very late by pupils, and it remains rather rare in texts (see Charolles (1995)). Moreover, what such a description does not capture is the intuition that we use mentionals in French (not only *celui-ci* but also *le premier, ce dernier,*) mostly when we have no other choice (i.e. when true pronouns are either ruled out - because in French pronouns are clitics, or ambiguous). So what such a proposition does not help to understand is: "why are mentionals so rare in authentic discourses"?

Now if one looks to authentic examples, it seems that the thesis of a "discursive promotion" is very difficult to maintain, even if one has a very large definition of what "discursive promotion" is. There are in fact many cases in which the DR mentionedby *celui-ci* is clearly a DR without any real importance for the discourse progression. Consider the following fragment:

> (14) C'était le garçon qu' ils avaient réclamé au poste, l'année
> dernière. N'ayant pu rendre à son maître le carton de
> dentelles perdu dans la bagarre, celui-ci l'avait accusé de vol,
> menacé des tribunaux; maintenant, il était commis dans une
> maison de roulage. Hussonnet, le matin, l'avait rencontré au
> coin d'une rue ...

In this example due to Flaubert (*L'éducation sentimentale)*, it would be very counter-intuitive to say that *celui-ci* promotes the DR of "son maître" as a main topic for the discourse. On the contrary, it is very interesting to observe that although *celui-ci* mentions this DR, the following pronoun *il* "jump back" over the mention of this discourse referent and is associated to *le garçon qu'ils avaient réclamé au poste.* What seems to happen in (14) is that the reference chain introduced by *celui-ci* is some sort of marginal, or peripherical chain which does not affect the accessibility of the main topic of the discourse for a subsequent pronominal anaphor. I have tried to show in Corblin (1998) that this use is rather widespread in some litterary texts. I dubbed "counter-topic" the DR picked up by *celui-ci,* in order to note that although this DR becomes a topic for a while, it preserves the satus of main topic of another DR of the discourse, and is typically used for individuals which are, so to speak, put aside some other DRs on which the discourse is centered. Here is another example:

(14)...et il usa, pour parfumer ses foulards, toute la provision
d'eau de Cologne qu'avait sa bru. Celle-ci ne se déplaisait point
dans sa compagnie. Il avait couru le monde : il parlait de Berlin,
de Vienne, de Strasbourg, de son temps d'officier, ...

Because each mentional has specific properties, and because their context of use is relevant, (especially the fact that one of them can be be used in contrast to one another), I will focus on the properties of those NPs which might be derived from their analysis as mentionals.

Why are mentionals so rare in discourse, although they are so useful for refential tasks (because they are non ambiguous) when compared to pronouns? The main fact, I think is that they work only locally, and on purely contingent discourse information, ignoring any other global structuration of the on-going discourse, and any information regarding the properties of the individuals they refer to. What they can do is just to extract, from a very narrow domain based on the previous clause, a mention, identified on the basis of its formal properties, and then to pick up its referent, whatever it is. But why should we do so, i.e. why should we ignore what is the topic of the discourse, what are the properties of the individuals it has introduced, and focus instead on the physical appearance of the immediate discourse context?

Possibly just when necessary, i.e. when the intended DR is not accessible (i.e unambiguously) to a pronominal reference, typically when there are more than one DR evoked in the discourse context, and when a pronoun cannot be used for reaching (or to reach safely) a given DR. Roughly speaking, the main handicap of mentionals is that they are purely local, purely formal, and thus, in a sense *non-monotonic*: they do not make use of the information (global information and information about the properties of DR previously introduced) which is accessible.

Basically, I think this conception of mentional references provides in addition a plausible basis for understanding the expression "rupture de familiarité" used by L. Tamowski to characterize the anaphoric use of "celui-ci". It is the familiarity with the information about individuals evoked previously (sorts, properties), with the topicalization previously established, which is ignored by a mentional reference (purely local and purely formal).

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