

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This dissertation examines the behavior of tense in discourse-narrative, in embedded clauses, in pragmatic context, and in "de-contextualized" sentences, and develops a unified analysis of both canonical tense usage and more problematic, non-canonical tense data, within the *mental spaces* framework (Fauconnier 1985). The work presented here is one more contribution to a very large body of literature on tense from both the literary and linguistic traditions. It is distinct from the standard approaches to tense (and to most previous approaches to tense) in a number of important ways, which will become clear as the discussion unfolds. One of the most important differences of the mental space analysis presented here is that contextual, discourse, and literary uses of tense are analyzed as employing the same mechanisms as tense in the simple sentence and in ordinary speech. Contextual and "non-contextual" tense meanings, narrative and non-narrative functions of tense are characterized in the same manner using the same set of theoretical constructs and notions. The data to be used in this dissertation is drawn principally from French and English, although our aim is to provide a model of tense which has more universal validity and which is consonant with the findings of cross-linguistic tense research (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994, Bybee and Dahl 1989, Bybee 1985, Dahl 1985).

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Section 1.1 introduces a wide variety of problematic tense data. In section 1.2, two standard approaches to contextual and

narrative uses of tense are considered. Section 1.3 discusses how the approach taken here differs from the standard approach, as well as the goals and general theoretical framework of the dissertation. Section 1.4 places this dissertation within a more general setting of tense literature, giving a brief overview of some of the major strategies used to account for tense systems as a whole, as well as strategies used to explain non-canonical uses of the Present tense. Finally, section 1.5 gives an outline of the structure of the dissertation as a whole.

1.1 Non-canonical Interpretations of Tense

In the standard account and in the standard folk theory, tense indicates the temporal location of an event, the event time, in relation to speech time (or some notion of speaker 'now'). The Present tense indicates that the event time is equal to speech time. The Past tense indicates that the event time precedes speech time. The Future tense indicates that the event time is posterior to speech time.

What is interesting about tense, however, is that the temporal interpretation given a tense morpheme is often different from its canonical temporal value. The Present tense may refer to an event which is not equal to speech time. For example, the English Simple Present may refer to events which are future in real time, as in (1.1).

- (1.1) a. I am leaving tomorrow.
b. We leave tonight at 7 o'clock.
c. When he comes tonight, I'll tell him about the party.
d. If I see him next week, I will ask him to call you.

- e. When he finds out how much work we've done,
 he will say that he is very happy with our progress. ¹

Both the English Present Progressive (1.1a) and the Simple Present (1.1b) may be used to express events which are posterior to speech time. In clauses which begin with 'if', the Simple Present may have a future temporal interpretation, as in (1.1d). In clauses which begin with {'when'}, the Simple Present is also obligatory for events which are posterior to speech time, as in (1.1e). Similar facts hold for clauses which begin with {'before', 'after', 'until', 'while', 'as soon as'}.

The Simple Present may also refer to past events, events which are prior to speech time, as in (1.2).

- (1.2) a. I'm walking down the street one day when suddenly this guy walks up to me...
 b. Nous sommes au 5 mai de l'annee 1555. Henri II regne sur la France.
 'It is May 5th, of the year 1555. Henry II rules over France.'
 (Dumas, A., *Le Page du Duc de Savoie*, t.I, 7, cited in
 Vuillaume (1990:83))
 c. He catches the ball. He runs. He makes a touchdown.

Use of the Simple Present to refer to past events is a common feature of both oral and written discourse/narrative.²

¹ Similar examples are discussed in Dowty (1982).

² The use of the Present to describe 'just prior' events is common in sportscasting.

A Past tense may also have a temporal interpretation which is different from its canonical temporal value. For example, the English Simple Past may refer to an event which does not precede speech time. The Simple Past may be used with a present interpretation, as in (1.3).

- (1.3) a. Do you have a minute? I wanted to ask you a question.
 b. I thought you might like to have one. (from Kress 1977)
 c. I wish I lived closer to my family.
 d. If I had time now, I would help you.

In (1.3a) and (1.3b), the Simple Past ('wanted' or 'thought') is used to increase the politeness of the request or suggestion encoded by the verb ('want' or 'think'). In (1.3c), the Simple Past ('lived') is used to express a wished-for, but counterfactual situation. In (1.3d), the Simple Past ('had') is used in a conditional construction to express a counterfactual situation.

The Simple Past tense may also be used for future events, events which are posterior to speech time, as in (1.4).

- (1.4) a. If I had time tonight, I would come to the party.
 b. J'ai termine [Passe Compose] dans un instant.
 'I finished/ have finished in a second' (from Imbs 1960)
 c. I have to go or he'll be asking what kept me. (from Janssen 1990)
 d. I can't go to the concert tonight. You'll have to tell me tomorrow how it was.

In (1.4a), the Simple Past ('had') has a future interpretation. It is used in a conditional

construction to express a counterfactual event. In (1.4b), the French *Passé Composé* is used to express future completion. In (1.4c), two interpretations are available for the Simple Past event ('kept'): it may be interpreted as prior only to speech time; it may also be interpreted as future in relation to the external speech time, the time the entire utterance is made, and prior only to the reported speech event ('will be asking'). For (1.4d), the embedded Simple Past tense ('was') cannot be interpreted as prior to the external speech time. The embedded Simple Past ('was') can only be interpreted as prior to tomorrow and the event 'tell'.³

The English 'will' Future may also have a non-canonical temporal interpretation, where the event is not interpreted as posterior to speech time. The 'will' Future may be used with a present interpretation, as in (1.5).

- (1.5) a. Will that be all?
 b. Yes, that will be all for now.
 c. Look in my purse, my keys will be there somewhere.

The expressions in (1.5a) and (1.5b) are commonly used by sales clerks and shoppers to end a current, present transaction. In (1.5c), the 'will' Future is used to surmise about the current, present location of the keys.

The 'will' Future may also be used for past events, as in (1.6).

³ In counterfactual constructions, the English Past Perfect may also be used with a non-canonical interpretation, where the Past Perfect refers to a domain properly covered by the Simple Past.

- (1.6) Professor Smith graduated from Harvard in 1957. In 1957, he went on to a professorship at Yale. From Yale he will join the National Academy of Sciences and go on to a brilliant research career.

The use of the Future tense for past events is a common practice in French obituaries.

The French Futur Anterieur, a future perfect, may also be used to surmise about past events. For example:

- (1.7) a. Elle a l'air contente; elle aura reussi [Futur Anterieur] a son examen.

'She looks happy; she must have passed the exam.'

- b. Il n'est pas dans le train; il l'aura manque [Futur Anterieur].

'He's not on the train; he must have missed it.'

Canonically, the Futur Anterieur is used to express an action which will happen in the future before another future action or situation. In (1.7a,b), the Futur Anterieur is used to surmise or express the probability of an event which is past in relation to speech time.

As illustrated in the preceding examples, the Simple Present, Simple Past, and 'will' Future tenses can each have a real-time present, past, or future interpretation, given the proper context. Compound tense forms may also have non-canonical interpretations. The use of tense, where its temporal interpretation is a non-canonical one, is not an anomaly of literary style, but rather, it is a regular patterned occurrence within the language. The variability of the temporal interpretations available for tense markers poses significant problems for the standard account which characterizes tense in terms of the relationship between the event time and speech time.

A number of problems are also posed for the standard account by the behavior of tense in indirect speech. In indirect speech, tense may anchor to some reference point other than external speech time, the speech time of the utterance as a whole. Consider for example the interpretation of the embedded tense in (1.8):

- (1.8) a. John will announce at midnight that he burned the document.
 b. The minister will burn the document at 10 p.m. At midnight he will announce that he burned the document two hours ago/before.⁴

In (1.8a), the Simple Past event ('burned') may be interpreted as prior to the external speech time. An interpretation is also available where the Simple Past ('burned') is interpreted as posterior to external speech time, and prior only to the future reported speech event 'will announce'. The latter interpretation is the only one available for (1.8b).

With an embedded 'will' Future, as in (1.9), the 'will' Future is obligatorily future or posterior to the reported speech event.

- (1.9) John will announce tomorrow that he will burn the document.

It is not sufficient that the 'will' Future event ('will burn') is posterior to external speech time, the event 'will burn' must also be future in relation to the reported speech event 'will announce'. The interpretation of the embedded Simple Past tense in (1.8b) and the embedded Future tense in (1.9) are not accounted for under the standard approach, where the Simple Past tense indicates that the event is prior to speech time and the 'will' Future

⁴ Smith (1981) gives a similar example, although the discussion is concerned with the anchoring of temporal adverb. Acceptability of the 'ago' adverb is dialect dependent.

indicates that the event is posterior to speech time.

More subtle difficulties are presented by indirect speech where both the matrix and the embedded verbs are in the Simple Past tense. Consider the temporal interpretations of the embedded clause in the following examples:

- (1.10) a. Yesterday at midnight John announced that he burned the document (at 10p.m., two hours before).⁵
- b. John said yesterday that he was happy (yesterday).
- c. John said yesterday that he was happy during his childhood.

In (1.10a), the embedded Simple Past ('burned') is prior in relation to external speech time by default. However, it must also be prior to the reported announcement which took place 'at midnight yesterday', given that it is lexically perfective and its interpretation is non-habitual. In contrast, with embedded imperfectives, two interpretations are available. The embedded Simple Past situation ('was') may be simultaneous to the reported speech event 'said' (1.10b), or it may be prior to the reported speech event 'said' (1.10c). These different anchoring possibilities are left unaccounted for under the standard treatment which characterizes tense only in relation to speech time.

In contrast, the embedded 'will' Future can never refer to a time frame which is concurrent to that of the reported speech event, even when lexically imperfective. Example (1.11) below may be contrasted with (1.10b) above.

⁵ In some dialects, only the past perfect 'had burned' is acceptable in this construction.

- (1.11) a. John will say tomorrow that he will be happy.
 b. John will say tomorrow that he is happy.

In (1.11a), the 'will' Future situation ('will be happy') must also be future in relation to the future speech event 'will say'; it cannot be interpreted as simultaneous to the reported speech event 'will say'. In order for the embedded situations 'be happy' to be simultaneous to the reported speech event 'will say', the Simple Present is required, as in (1.11b). Again, the interpretation of the embedded 'will' Future (1.11a) may be contrasted with that of the embedded Simple Past ('was') in (1.10b), which can be interpreted as simultaneous to the reported speech event. The fact that the embedded 'will' Future, but not the embedded Simple Past, must anchor to the reported speech event is left unexplained by the standard analysis.

Note that a reading is not available where the 'will' Future ('will burn') is posterior to external speech time, but prior to the reported speech event 'will announce', as in (1.12).

- (1.12) * John will announce tomorrow that he will burn the document tonight.

Under the standard treatment, where the 'will' Future indicates that event time is posterior to speech time, we would expect (1.12) to be acceptable. The unacceptability of (1.12) is left unexplained under the standard analysis.

Similarly, with an embedded Simple Past, neither embedded perfectives nor imperfectives allow a reading where the Simple Past event is past only in relation to external speech time, but future in relation to the reported speech event. This is true for verbs which are both lexically perfective and imperfective, as shown by the unacceptability

of (1.13a) and (1.13b).

- (1.13) a. * Yesterday at midnight John announced that he burned the document
this morning.
- b. * John said yesterday that he was sick today.

Under the standard analysis, where the Simple Past indicates that the event is prior to speech time, we would expect an embedded Simple Past to be acceptable in (1.13); the unacceptability of the Simple Past ('burned') in (1.13a) and the Simple Past ('was') in (1.13b) is not accounted for.

The behavior of the Simple Present in the embedded clause of reported speech also presents problems for the standard analysis. Consider the interpretations available for the embedded Simple Present in (1.14).

- (1.14) a. John said yesterday that he is sick.
- b. John will announce tomorrow that he is sick.
- c. John was in San Francisco yesterday. I talked to John's secretary (yesterday).
She said he is in Los Angeles today.

In (1.14a), the Simple Present event 'he is sick' may be interpreted as referring to a time period which extends to include both external speech time and the time of the reported speech event 'said'. In (1.14b), 'he is sick' may refer to a time period which includes both 'now' (external speech time) and 'tomorrow' or it may refer only to a future time period which does not include 'now'. In (1.14c), the event 'he is in Los Angeles' refers only to a time period 'today', which does not extend to include the time of the reported speech event

'she said'. This interpretation may be contrasted with that of (1.14a). Under the standard treatment of tense, the possible future interpretation of the Simple Present in (1.14b) is not explained. Moreover, the characterization of the Simple Present in terms of temporal points does not capture the extended interpretations available for the Simple Present in (1.14a,b).

Another area of considerable difficulty for the standard approach to tense is the behavior of tense in conditional/counterfactual constructions. As is widely noted, the temporal interpretation of tense in the protasis of conditional constructions is most often not its canonical temporal value. Examples (1.1d), (1.3c), and (1.4a) are repeated here along with other examples.

- (1.15) a. If I had time now, I would help you.
 b. If I had time tonight, I would come to the party.
 c. If I had seen him yesterday, I would have asked him to call you.
 d. If I see him next week, I will ask him to call you.
 e. * If I'll see him next week, I will ask him to call you.

In the protasis ('if clause') of counterfactual conditional constructions, the Simple Past may be used with a present or future interpretation, as in (1.15a,b). In counterfactual conditional constructions, the Past Perfect may be used to refer to the domain of time properly covered by the Simple Past, as in (1.15c). In the protasis of hypothetical conditional constructions, the Simple Present may be used with a future interpretation, as in (1.15d). Even though the temporal interpretation is future, in most cases the 'will' Future is unacceptable in the protasis, as shown by (1.15e). The behavior of tense in the

protasis of conditional constructions is left unexplained by the standard account.

A more subtle problem is posed by the interpretation of tense in the apodosis ('then clause'). Consider the interpretation of the tense in the apodosis of (1.16).

(1.16) a. If Mary calls me tomorrow, (it's because) she is unhappy.

b. If I see him next week, I will ask him to call you.

In (1.16a), the embedded Simple Present situation 'she is unhappy' is interpreted as present in relation to the hypothetical event tomorrow. If indeed she calls tomorrow, then the situation would be interpreted as present in relation to tomorrow (which would have become 'now'). The Simple Present situation 'she is unhappy' does not tell us anything about Mary's current state. She may in fact be unhappy 'now' at external speech time, but this is not necessarily so. Similarly, in (1.16b), the embedded Future event 'I will ask him' is future only in relation to next week, either in the hypothetical domain, or given that the conditions set up by the apodosis are met, in the real world domain. These subtle semantic facts are not explained by the standard analysis where tense is anchored to speech time.

In addition to the difficulties posed by tense in the protasis and the apodosis, conditional constructions often have unexpected tense combinations. The standard characterization of tense does not give us a handle on the many unexpected tense combinations which may occur in conditional constructions. Nor does it give us a way of ruling out tense combinations which do not occur.

Written discourse-narrative poses an entirely different set of problems for a speaker based tense system. First, the author and reader may be separated in time, space, and personal knowledge. In fiction, the reader typically does not have access to the author's speech time. Tense must be interpreted in relation to a speech time, but speech time is undefined.⁶

Second, Past, Present, and Future tenses may anchor to some point within the past story world. For example:

(1.17) Sur cette escabelle a trois pieds et si pres du feu que la point de ses sabots se charbonne, est assise [Present] la dame Goton Rehou, femme de charge de La Tremlays. Elle fut [Passe Simple], si l'on en croit [Present] la chronique de la foret, une joyeuse commere; mais cela date de quarante ans, et, a l'heure qu'il est [Present], elle fume une pipe courte noircie par un long usage [...].

(Feval, P., *Le Loup blanc*, 74, from Vuillaume (1990:81))

On this three footed stool, so close to the fire that the tips of her clogs are becoming black, dame Goton Rehou is seated, housekeeper of La Tremplays. She was, if one believes the chronicle/gossip of the forest, a happy gossip; but that dates back forty years, and, at the hour that it is now, she is smoking a short pipe, blackened from long use ...

The kind of tense shift phenomena seen with the Historical or Narrative Present is not

⁶ The problem is not a trivial one and has led many researchers to propose that in narrative tense does not have a deictic zero point or that there are 'speakerless sentences' (Banfield 1982).

confined to the Present tense, but may occur with the both Future and Past tenses. Future and Past tenses may anchor to the story now, just as Present tenses do. In (1.17), for example, the Historical Present is used to refer to the past story world. The *Passé Simple* ('fut') is used to refer to an event 40 years prior to the 'now' of the story world, rather than 40 years prior to 'now'. Tense is not anchored to speech time.⁷

Third, in written narrative tense may not be anchored to the speech time of the speaker at all. It may instead be anchored to the reader's time. Imagine a letter containing the following sentences:

- (1.18) a. I'm writing to you from Greece.
 b. You are now reading my last letter.

As Fillmore (1975) points out, tense can refer to either the encoder or the decoder's time. In (1.18a), the Present Progressive is interpreted as referring to the time of writing. In (1.18b), the Present Progressive is interpreted as referring to the time of reading. The Present tense does not indicate that the event is equal to speech time, but rather, it indicates that the event is equal to reader time.

An even more dramatic anchoring of tense to reader time is provided by the following example (1.19):

⁷ As will be seen in this chapter in section 1.4 and in chapter 7, a number of discourse-pragmatic functions have been proposed for use of the Simple Present in Past tense narrative. The Simple Present may be used for different subjective effects: to set up a kind of direct viewing arrangement, to express the narrator's subjective distance from or involvement in the events or characters of the story, to highlight or foreground important parts of the text, or to express narrative point of view. A complete account of tense should have something to say about these discourse-pragmatic effects and their relationship to the more usual "non-contextual" uses of tense.

(1.19) Le gauche recueille [Present] les lauriers d'une union longuement et difficilement acquise. Sur l'ensemble des villes de plus de 30000 habitants, elle recueillait [Imparfait] a l'heure ou nous ecrivons [Present] environ 52% des voix ...

(Le Progres, 3/14/77, from Vuillaume 1990)

The left is reaping the rewards of a union acquired with difficulty over a long period of time. Among all towns with more than 30,000 inhabitants, the left gathered at the hour at which we write about 52% of the votes...

In this example, the author is again sensitive to the time division between the act of writing and the act of reading. The speech time, 'l'heure ou nous ecrivons [Present]' ("the hour at which we write"), is presented as equal to the time of the reported event time, 'elle recueillait [Imparfait]' ("it gathered"). The Present event, the time of writing, is presented as equal to speech time. The Imparfait (Past) event, 'it gathered', is presented as prior to the reader's time. One tense category is anchored to speech time, the other to the reader's time. Clearly, a more complex notion of speech time would be needed to handle examples such as these.

In this section, we have considered some of the various non-canonical temporal interpretations which tense markers may have, and the problems presented for tense theory by conditional constructions, embedded clauses of indirect speech, and discourse-narrative. In the following section, we will look at two standard approaches to these "unusual", non-canonical interpretations.

1.2 Non-canonical, Contextual Uses of Tense:

Two Standard Treatments

A central theoretical question raised by non-canonical, "contextual" uses of tense-aspect is how and where these non-canonical, contextual meanings arise. At issue is how the non-canonical, contextual meanings should be characterized in relation to their canonical, "basic", "non-contextual" meanings; and what information is properly included in the characterization of a given tense marker. The answer to these questions involves our basic view of the organization and function of language.

The standard approach to contextual vs. non-contextual meaning involves a model of linguistic organization where processing and production is divided into several components: a syntactic component, responsible for grammatical rules, structures, and grammatical functions; a semantic component which includes referential meanings; and a pragmatic or discourse-pragmatic component which fixes up the interpretation given in the semantic component, according to contextual and pragmatic conditions.

Under the component model approach, tense markers are characterized in terms of their context-independent meanings. Meanings associated with a given tense morpheme in pragmatic contexts are assigned to a separate pragmatic component. Comrie (1985), who maintains a distinction between basic, semantic meanings and associated pragmatic implicatures, is a classic example of such an approach. Comrie claims that tense-aspect morphemes should be characterized in terms of their semantic (i.e. context-independent) meaning: for tense, the grammaticalization of location in time. It may be possible for tense to have other interpretations in particular contexts, however, "these are always explainable in terms of the interaction of context-independent meaning and context, and

do not therefore form part of the meaning of the tense category in question" (Comrie 1985:26).

The objection that may be raised for the standard component model approach is that the work on how contextual meanings arise from the combination of basic meanings and associated implicatures is simply never done, and hence, a large amount of data is left unaccounted for. The approach of Comrie (1985) reflects the bias in modern linguistics by which contextual and discourse data is excluded from the linguist's domain of inquiry. Meanings associated with contextual and narrative uses of tense are simply assigned to the pragmatic component. Hence, they are no longer problematic, since pragmatics is not a central concern of the semantic theorist or of linguistics proper. Fauconnier (1990) has argued that approaches which divide language into separate components are incorrect, pointing out the failure of such approaches to account for a wide range of linguistic data, to develop satisfactory pragmatic principles, and to develop unifying explanatory principles.

Another traditional approach taken by text oriented linguists and literary theorists to the "specialized" behavior of tense in narrative is to propose a different tense system or a different linguistic mode for narrative and non-narrative contexts. Under this dual tense system approach, tense has a temporal function in non-narrative contexts, but in narrative, tense's temporal function is suspended for other pragmatic, performative functions.

Benveniste (1959) was perhaps the first to propose that there is a special marked tense system for narrative which exists alongside the unmarked non-narrative tense system. There is a great deal of work which follows in this tradition, distinguishing between two modes of description or communication, each with its own tense system or

set of tense functions (Bull 1963, Lyons 1977, Weinrich 1973, Hamburger 1973, Bellos 1978, Bache 1986, Fleischman 1990).

Bache (1986), for example, proposes a distinction between two modes of communication: a normal referring mode and a fictional mode. What serves as the marked category is different in each mode. For the referring mode, the unmarked category is the present tense. For the fictional mode, the unmarked category is the preterite. In the fictional mode, there is "category suspension" of the past and present tenses. Verbs in this mode have a kind of performative function, rather than a referential one. The past tense does not convey a past situation relative to the present moment; but rather, it is a literary convention for establishing the literary universe of narration. The present tense creates the illusion that there is no fictional distance. In the fictional mode, there is no direct communication between the reader and author and the deictic zero-point is wholly or partially suspended. The work of literature is understood and interpreted without the knowledge of the deictic zero-point.

Under the dual tense system approach, tense in narrative is viewed as somehow different in meaning and function than tense in the normal conversational mode. The greatest difficulty for the dual tense system or dual tense function approach is that there is no clear cut line between what is normal communication or conversation and what is narrative, between which tense forms are used where. A disadvantage of this type of approach is that separate notions are needed to account for narrative and non-narrative uses of tense, and typically, the relationship between the narrative and non-narrative uses which a given tense morpheme may have is unmotivated.

1.3 Goals and Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation develops an analysis of tense in both its canonical and non-canonical uses within the mental spaces framework. The goal of this thesis is to provide a characterization of tense which will account for tense in pragmatic context, in discourse-narrative, in embedded indirect speech, in conditional and counterfactual constructions, as well as in simple "non-contextual" sentences in a unified, theory internal manner. The approach taken here is distinct from the standard analysis in a number of important ways. Under the approach taken in this dissertation, no distinction is made between: semantic and pragmatic meanings; between contextual and "non-contextual" meanings; between sentence level and discourse level phenomena; or between tense in narrative and non-narrative settings. Meaning construction is not the divided work of separate components. There are no separate narrative and non-narrative tense systems.

The view of language taken here is one where all sentences have context; although the context may be a minimal one, it is still a context. The constraints which a given tense morpheme places on the process of meaning construction are the same in narrative and non-narrative contexts, in contextual and "non-contextual" settings. The effects of a given tense category in pragmatic context and in narrative, as well as its fine grained effects at the sentence level, will be accounted for using the same set of theoretical constructs, notions, and principles, and the same basic characterization of the tense category in question. The analysis offered in this dissertation is also distinct in that tense is always anchored to a deictic center. A deictic center (i.e. a BASE space) is always present, although it may be highly abstract.

As a part of this investigation, we will look at a wide variety of tense data

including: the non-canonical uses of tense illustrated in examples (1.1) through (1.19) above; habituais; generics; conditional and counterfactual constructions; embedded indirect speech; embedded relative clauses; the cooccurrence restrictions on Perfects and time adverbs; and the contrastive distributional properties of tense markers in both French and English. We will also investigate the organization of tense and deictic reference in narrative, the origin of subjectivity effects associated with tense, and the role which tense plays in the expression of narrative point of view.

The approach taken here follows in the tradition of cognitive linguistics, which views language as grounded in human cognition and conceptualization. The theoretical foundation for this dissertation is drawn in particular from the theory of 'mental spaces' (Fauconnier 1985, 1986a, 1986b 1990, 1991, to appear), and from work on 'partitioned representations' (Dinsmore 1991), as well as from the ideas of Langacker (1987, 1991). A central claim of mental space theory is that language depends on links to cognitively motivated structures; these mental constructs, referred to as mental spaces, are independent of linguistic structure, yet are crucial to the construction of meaning and the interpretation of language.

The interpretation of discourse results in the construction of a hierarchically structured set (or sets) of spaces, which are pragmatically elaborated and dynamically updated as the discourse interpretation process unfolds. As language is interpreted, spaces and local connections between spaces are built, and information is distributed over and accumulated within these spaces based on linguistic cues. Different spaces may be linked by local relationships established between spaces or via connectors which establish a pragmatic link between elements in different spaces. The partitioning of spaces allows information to be separated into different domains; each mental space serves as a local

domain for reasoning and inferencing.

Linguistic elements and expressions play a role in signalling the construction of spaces, the construction of elements within those spaces, the relations between elements in a given space or across different spaces, and the relations between spaces themselves. Mental space structures may also be built and filled as a result of pragmatic information, mapping from other domains, or as a result of inferencing or reasoning processes. Linguistic elements impose a set of constraints on and give the language decoder a set of partial and underdetermined instructions for the type of space construction which can be built. Linguistic elements do not completely determine meaning, but rather, they constrain the possible set of meanings. The language input may underspecify the space construction process, and hence, a given utterance may result in more than one possible space configuration.

Although linguistic elements provide instructions for meaning construction, the cognitive construction process takes place at a cognitive level which is distinct from language structure. Grammar is organized to convey the maximum amount of information about the higher level organization of discourse semantics, with the minimum amount of work.

In this dissertation, we will investigate the important role which tense plays in the cognitive construction process. I will present a model which is an extension of the ideas of Fauconnier (1985, 1990, to appear), Dinsmore (1991),⁸ and also of Langacker (1991). In addition to the mental space format and the general mental space principles of *access*,

⁸ Dinsmore (1991) develops the notion of FOCUS space, generalizing Reichenbach's notion of referent point as a special case of FOCUS. He presents an analysis of the English Perfect/Preterite distinction in terms of FOCUS space distinctions.

optimization and *matching*,⁹ four primitive theoretical discourse notions are central to the model: BASE, FOCUS, EVENT, and V-POINT. Roughly, BASE is a kind of deictic center, the space to which the discourse as a whole is anchored; FOCUS is the space which is the center or focus of attention, the space which a sentence is "about"; EVENT is the space where the full structure of the event or situation indicated by the verb is constructed; and V-POINT is an anchor point for tense-aspect categories (as well as time adverbs). In the folk definition, V-POINT is the position from which events or situations are viewed. As discourse is processed, these concepts are distributed over a set of hierarchically related spaces. The distribution of {BASE, FOCUS, EVENT, V-POINT} over a set of spaces is constrained by a set of Discourse Organization Principles¹⁰, as well as by linguistic information. Tense-aspect is particularly important in this regard.

As a central feature of this model, I propose characterizations of a set of putatively universal tense-aspect categories: {PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE, PROGRESSIVE, PERFECT, IMPERFECTIVE, PERFECTIVE}. The important point is that these categories are discourse notions. Each tense-aspect category is a universal type of discourse link between spaces.¹¹ The combination of space partitioning and these discourse links allows the speaker to separate information, elements, situations and events in time, in epistemic distance, in status as FOCUS or non-FOCUS, and in status as FACT or PREDICTION. Tense-aspect operates fundamentally by local links between spaces. These local discourse links may be combined together in various ways to form a chain of

⁹ See chapter 2 for a presentation of these principles.

¹⁰ See chapter 3 for a presentation of these Discourse Organization Principles.

¹¹ The IMPERFECTIVE and PERFECTIVE are slightly different from the other categories in this respect. The function of each tense-aspect category will be spelled out in detail in chapters 3 and 4.

links. A local link or chain of links forms an *access path* to a particular target space. The access path will always be anchored to BASE or some other V-POINT. In order to interpret a tensed verbal expression, to access a space, the speaker needs to know the anchor and the chain of links which form an access path to the target space.

The discourse links operate at a level of cognitive construction which is separate both from the real world and from language structure.¹² These universal discourse links or chains of these links may map onto and be encoded by the grammatical markers of a particular language. There is cross-mapping between the cognitive discourse links and the grammatical markers which encode them. There is also cross-mapping between the real world and the cognitive discourse constructs which allow us to "reconstruct" an idealized cognitive version of that world. The discourse links give us a way of reconstructing real world time.

As a grammatical category, tense imposes a set of constraints on the construction of meaning, on the possible space configurations which may be built. One of the important claims made in the work presented here is that tense plays a fundamental role in discourse management and organization. Tense plays a number of discourse organizational roles, giving the speaker a set of instructions about the construction and organization of spaces, the organization and distribution of the discourse primitives {BASE, FOCUS, EVENT, V-POINT}, the partitioning and distribution of information over a set of spaces, the local links and hierarchical relationships between spaces, the

¹² In this dissertation, I will use the convention (CAPS) to indicate the universal discourse notions {PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE, PROGRESSIVE, PERFECT, IMPERFECTIVE, PERFECTIVE}. The convention (Caps), only first letter in caps, is used to refer to language specific markers, i.e. Simple Present, Present Perfect, Future, etc... The convention (no caps) is used for "real-world" time concepts, i.e. future, present, and past.

access path taken to reach a particular space, and the accessibility of the information within a given space vis-a-vis other spaces. The grammar of tense is efficiently organized to give a maximum amount of information about the higher level discourse semantics and discourse organization.

The idea that tense plays a central role as a discourse organizer (or in discourse-pragmatics) is not a new one. Kamp and Rohrer (1983), for example, claim that the "main function of tense is to signal to the recipient of the sentence in which the tense occurs how he should incorporate the information the sentence brings in into the representation which he has already formed of the preceding sections of the text or discourse of which the sentence is a part". From a more functional perspective, Givon (1984) proposes that tense-aspect markers play an important role in coding discourse coherence or connectedness, without spelling out in detail how this is accomplished. Tense-aspect markers "constitute one of the major devices for coding the connectedness - or coherence - of sentences in their wider discourse context" (Givon 1984:269).

Bybee and Dahl (1989) also propose that the high degree of cross-linguistic similarity of tense-aspect grams (grammatical morphemes) suggest that tense has an important discourse and pragmatic function. "If we assume that language change takes place as language is used, the fact that such a small number of paths and gram types in the tense-aspect domain may be identified for a large number of languages points strongly to a small set of highly generalized discourse and pragmatic functions served by tense and aspect grams" (Bybee and Dahl 1989:96). As a grammatical marker, tense's meaning is highly general and relational in quality, serving to relate parts of clauses or parts of discourse to one another.¹³

¹³ This is in contrast to lexical meaning which is specific and referential.

In terms of mental space theory, the close examination of the behavior of tense in both contextual and "non-contextual" settings allows us to understand more general principles of discourse organization, principles of space access, the nature of space embeddings for conditional constructions, embedded relatives, and subordinate clauses of indirect speech. When tense is viewed and analyzed in terms of its role as a discourse organizer, and when this role is characterized in a precise manner, we find that data which poses significant problems for the sentence level approach to linguistics is no longer problematic.

The mental space approach taken here has a number of advantages: First, no division is made between contextual and non-contextual, between narrative and non-narrative tense phenomena. Contextual and non-contextual, narrative and non-narrative functions of tense are accounted for using the same set of theoretical constructs and principles, principles and constructs which are also used to account for a wide variety of phenomena unrelated to tense. Second, the mental space approach allows us to capture in a more precise and operationally defined way the intuitions of Bybee and Dahl (1989) and Givon (1984) that tense plays a central role in coding discourse connectedness and coherence.¹⁴ Third, the account presented here allows us to account for a wide variety of the distributional peculiarities of individual tense morphemes. Finally, mental space theory provides a refined and precise way of talking about how tense markers are used in the expression of subjectivity and narrative point of view.

¹⁴ A more precise account of tense's role in discourse organization and discourse semantics also offers support for Bybee and Dahl's claim that the primary force behind grammaticization of tense-aspect is not merely temporal location, but rather some general discourse-pragmatic or processing function(s) served by tense-aspect grams (grammatical morphemes).

Before giving an overview of the dissertation as a whole, I will provide a general setting for the work in this dissertation, by touching on general themes and trends in the tense literature which are relevant to the work undertaken here.

1.4 General Approaches to Tense

In the following section, I will highlight certain general approaches to tense systems as a whole, as well as certain approaches to non-canonical uses of the Present tense, to which the work in this dissertation may be contrasted. More specific analyses of individual tense markers or particular embedded constructions types will be considered in following chapters where warranted.

1.4.1 Tense as a Marker of Temporal Relationships

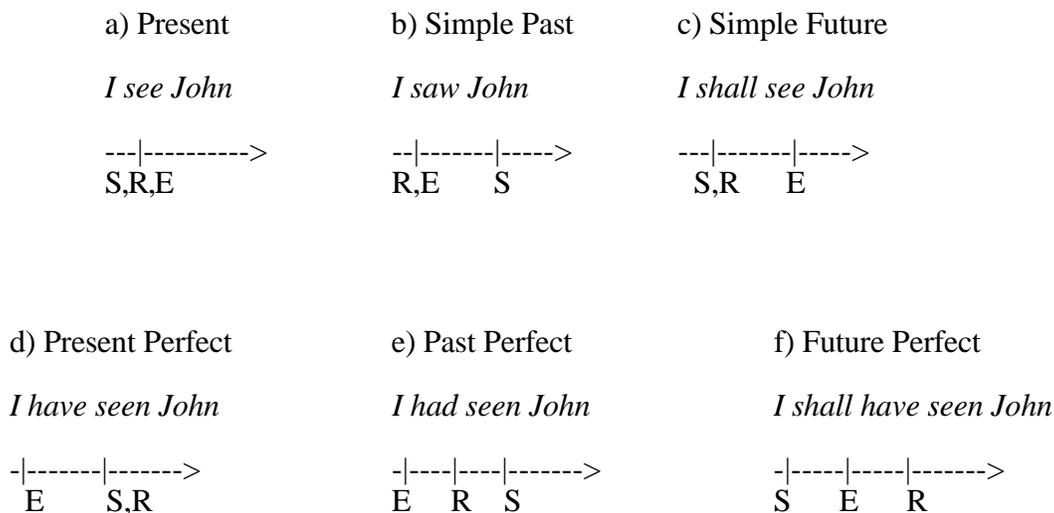
In the standard approach, tense is characterized in terms of temporal points on a time line. Tense marks the temporal location of an event, or rather, the temporal relationship between the time of speech and the time of event. Most characterizations of tense, at least in non-narrative settings, appeal either explicitly or implicitly to some model or notion of which includes temporal points on a time line.

Reichenbach (1947) is a classic example of this type of account. Briefly, Reichenbach characterizes tense in terms of three temporal points: "point of the event",

"point of speech", and "point of reference".¹⁵ Reichenbach diagrams the tense distinctions in English as in Figure 1.1:

FIGURE 1.1

Reichenbach's Tense System



E = point of the event

S = point of speech

R = point of reference

Under Reichenbach's system, only the point of reference and not the point of event can be

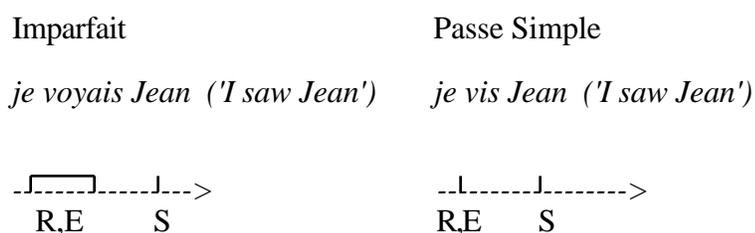
¹⁵ Reference point is not a clearly defined notion in Reichenbach's system. Many researchers have used this notion, typically defining it as the temporal perspective taken on an event. Notional equivalents or counterparts to reference time appear in various analyses under labels such as 'focus', 'viewpoint', 'reference point', etc.... Notional equivalents or counterparts to the time of speech also appear under the labels of 'immediate reality', 'speaker now', 'right now', etc....

specified by the time adverbs, such as 'now' or 'yesterday'.¹⁶

In order to handle progressive tense forms and imperfectives, Reichenbach extends the notion of event to cover a certain stretch of time. For example, the distinction between the French *Imparfait* and the *Passe Simple*, an imperfective and a perfective respectively, is represented as in Figure 1.2.

FIGURE 1.2

Reichenbach's Account of Aspect



The actual tense data presents a number of difficulties for Reichenbach's system. First, under Reichenbach's system, only the point of reference and not the point of event can be specified by the time adverbs, such as 'now' or 'yesterday'. As Janssen (1988) points out, this leaves the interpretation of the time adverb in examples such as 'John had finished 2 weeks ago' unaccounted for, since 2 weeks ago can refer to the time of event (E) or time of reference (R). Second, the representation of temporal semantics in terms of temporal points, rather than temporal segments, requires a special device for the representation of aspectual distinctions such as the imperfective/ perfective. Most importantly, it is not obvious how Reichenbach's account would be extended to account

¹⁶ This idea is carried forward in Fillmore (1975), who proposes that the reference time can be made explicit by means of a time specifier phrase. For Fillmore, the reference time is the point or period that is the temporal focus or background for the event or condition being described in the time clause.

for all of the cases where the temporal interpretation given a particular tense marker is not its temporal value, as in examples (1.1) through (1.19) presented in this chapter.

In more recent work on tense-aspect, Dinsmore (1991) generalizes Reichenbach's notion of reference time in terms of a more general semantic process of 'contextualization', the process of locating the appropriate mental space, the appropriate domain for construction of meaning cued by the contents of the clause. Dinsmore subsumes Reichenbach's notion of reference time as a special case of 'focus'. Reference time is defined as the temporal perspective taken on the event, the time mentioned in the context of the temporal focus space. The focus space is the current, most active space, the space where the meaning construction is taking place.

Using the notion of 'focus', Dinsmore provides a mental space account of the distinction between the English Simple Past and Present Perfect. With the Present Perfect, a past event is represented in the current (present) space. With the Simple Past, a past event is represented in a past focus space. The distinction between the Present Perfect and the Simple Past (non-perfect) allows the same basic knowledge structure of an event to be represented in different temporal focus spaces. If the present space is in focus, then by using the Present Perfect the speaker may refer to a past event without shifting the focus from the present temporal space. In this way, the Present Perfect allows the speaker to avoid a focus shift.

The advantage of generalizing the notion of point of reference to a broader notion of focus space is that the mental space framework provides a theory internal way of representing temporal semantics in terms of temporal segments or time periods, rather than temporal points. No special device is needed to handle the temporally durative

quality of imperfectives. However, like Reichenbach, Dinsmore's account is concerned with tense-aspect in the canonical case. He does not attempt to address the large number of cases where the temporal interpretation given a tense morpheme is different from its canonical value.

The work in this dissertation is an extension of the approach taken by Dinsmore (1991), as well as Fauconnier (1985, to appear). The mental space format and general mental space principles will be extended to account for more difficult tense data, including non-canonical uses of tense, and tense in more complex discourse-narrative.

1.4.2 Dual Tense System/ Dual Function Approach

A number of different approaches address the difference between the "basic" temporal function of tense and the seemingly odd behavior of tense in narrative. One strategy used to account for "specialized" uses of tense in narrative, mentioned in earlier in this chapter, has been to propose a different tense system or a different linguistic mode for narrative and non-narrative contexts (Benveniste 1959, Bull 1963, Lyons 1977, Weinrich 1973, Hamburger 1973, Bellos 1978, Bache 1986, Fleischman 1990). We take a moment here to discuss these approaches in a bit more detail.

Benveniste (1959) proposes a distinction between two linguistic modes - 'discours' and 'histoire' - with a different tense system for each mode. 'Discours' is a spoken register which uses 1st and 2nd person, the Present, Future and compound Past tenses. In addition to the spoken register, there is a special marked tense system for narrative which exists alongside the unmarked non-narrative tense system. 'Histoire' is a written register

which uses the 3rd person with the aorist tense, while Present, Future and compound tenses are absent. In the 'histoire' mode, neither the pragmatic context, nor the spatio-temporal location of the speaker are recoverable from the verb form.

The most obvious difficulty for Benveniste's account is that the world of discourse-narrative cannot be divided so neatly into two genres, each with its own tense and person forms. In fact, neither the distinction between the two genres, nor the use of the tense and person forms is clear cut. The written register 'histoire' may contain 1st and 2nd person forms, as well as Present, Future and compound tenses, while the spoken register 'discours' may contain 3rd person forms. The distinction between conversation and narrative is one of gradation.

In an approach similar to that of Benveniste, Weinrich (1973) also proposes a special marked tense system for narrative, which exists alongside the tense system of non-narrative language. He proposes that there are two basic attitudes of the speaker or writer to the world that is the object of his utterance: 'besprechende' (discussing attitude) and 'erza:hlende' (narrating attitude). Each of these different attitudes has a separate tense system with its own orientational zero-point. For the normal discussing attitude, the zero tense is the Present, while for the narrating mode, the zero tense is the preterite. In both cases, the zero tense does not contain information about time. In the discussing mode, the Present does not have information about time. In narrative, the preterite has a non-temporal, purely narrative function.

Hamburger's (1973) view of the preterite is similar to that of Weinrich. Hamburger proposes a special narrative status for texts. The function of the preterite in the novel is not to assign events to a temporal sphere. Rather, the preterite serves to

fictionalize events, to present them as part of an epic fiction. In a variation on this theme, Bellos (1978) proposes that narrative has a special pragmatic status, but not a special tense system.

As discussed in section 1.3, Bache (1986) also proposes a distinction between two modes of communication: a normal referring mode and a fictional mode, with different markedness conditions in each mode. In the fictional mode, the deictic zero-point is wholly or partially suspended. The work of literature is understood and interpreted without the knowledge of the deictic zero point. Similarly, Fleischman (1990) proposes that there are two sets of tense-aspect categories: one for communication and one for narration. Tense in each category (typically) has a different function, and each category has different markedness values. When speaker based tenses, such as the Present, occur in narration referring to the past story now, their contribution to meaning is something other than temporal location. At the propositional level, tense's basic function is temporal. At the narrative level, the function of tense is not the "basic" function of expressing temporal reference; its basic function is discourse-pragmatic.

A number of general, unifying ideas or themes are developed in these discussions. The most general theme is that tense in narrative is viewed as somehow different in meaning and function than tense in the normal conversational mode. A second theme which develops is that narrative and conversation have different markedness conditions. A third theme is the non-temporality of tense in narrative; tense's function in narrative is not to mark time, but rather to serve other discourse-pragmatic functions. Finally, there is the theme that tense in narrative is interpreted without knowledge of the speaker's spatio-

temporal location, and without recovery of the deictic center.¹⁷

The greatest difficulty for this type of approach is that there is no clear cut distinction between what is normal communication or conversation and what is narrative. There is no clear cut division between which tense forms are used where. A disadvantage of these approaches is that separate notions are needed to account for narrative and non-narrative uses of tense.

An advantage to the mental space approach is that no separate notions are needed to account for narrative and non-narrative uses of tense. Under the mental space account, the meaning which a given tense morpheme and the constraints which a given tense morpheme places on the process of meaning construction are the same in narrative and non-narrative contexts. Under the mental space analysis, tense is always anchored to a deictic center (i.e. a BASE space), although it may be highly abstract. This treatment is consonant with Langacker's (1991) view that every sentence implies a conceptualizer. There are no speakerless sentences in the sense of Banfield (1982).

1.4.3 Tense in Context: Pragmatic Functions of Tense in Discourse-Narrative

While standard accounts such as Reichenbach (1947) and Comrie (1985) are concerned with canonical, sentence level tense phenomena, there has been a great deal of interest in non-canonical tense usage, particularly in the behavior of tense in narrative. Much of this work is concerned with the function of the Present tense in Past tense

¹⁷ A similar idea reappears in Banfield's (1982) claim that there are "speakerless sentences".

narrative, and with delimiting the discourse-pragmatic functions and effects which tense may have. Researchers have proposed that tense in narrative may perform a variety of discourse-pragmatic functions. In this section, we will look at the central proposals which have been made about the discourse-pragmatic functions of tense in narrative.

Schiffrin (1981), Silva-Corvalan (1983), Fleischman (1985), and Johnstone (1987) propose that the Present tense may be used to highlight or foreground important events (Schiffrin 1981, Johnstone 1987).¹⁸ Fleischman (1985), for example, proposes that in Old French tense switching to Present tense in Past tense narrative functions in Old French for a strategy of 'narrative subordination' or 'grounding'. Grounding is an extension of the gestalt figure-ground opposition to the textual level. The notion grounding corresponds to the foreground/background distinction, except that it is not a binary distinction.

Tense's role in highlighting or foregrounding important events functions as a kind of 'internal evaluation mechanism' (Silva-Corvalan 1983). By highlighting particular events, the author evaluates their significance or importance to the story. With the Present tense, the author may mark the relative salience and/or importance of events to the structure of the narrative, and thus, tense may play an important role in indicating the overall organization and/or structure of a narrative text.

Tense-aspect markers in general may play a role in the expression of point of view or what Genette (1980) refers to as 'focalization', the perspective from which events are viewed or narrated (Bronzwaer 1970, Cohn 1978, Ducrot 1979, Osselton 1982,

¹⁸ For a discussion of the foreground/background distinction, see also Givon (1984), Givon (1977), Hopper (1979) and Hopper and Thompson (1980).

Fleischman 1990). The Present tense, in particular, may be used to express point of view, to mark shifts in focalization, or to mark interior monologues (Imbs 1960). Since the Present tense may also be anchored to the author's now, the Present tense may also mark 'external evaluation' (Labov 1972, Fleischman 1990), where the author exits the deictic story world and comments on the story and the significance of the story outside of the story proper.¹⁹

Tense-aspect distinctions may also play a role in the expression of subjectivity. Bronzwaer (1970), for example, proposes that tense shifts may indicate the narrator's empathetic involvement with the focalized objects, notably the story participants. Banfield (1982) proposes that imperfectives and progressives may be used to indicate represented perceptions because they encode an experiencing-self. Boyer (1985a, 1985b) shows that the distinction between the *Passe Compose* vs. *Passe Simple* in French may be used to mark empathy with the subject. Johnstone (1987) proposes that the Present tense may be used to express the relative authority or status of an individual.

These works, which investigate the pragmatic meanings which may be associated with tense-aspect, have illuminated important aspects of the behavior of tense in narrative. However, in general these approaches do not attempt to provide a motivated account of the relationship between the proposed discourse-pragmatic meanings/functions and the more "basic", propositional or referential meanings which a given tense marker might have. Fleischman (1990), who attempts to motivate a relationship between basic meanings and discourse-pragmatic meanings based on a principle of diachronic change, is one exception to this.

¹⁹ 'External evaluation' is evaluation from the viewpoint of the external author.

1.4.4 Diachronic Origin of Contextual Meanings

Fleischman (1990), while maintaining a distinction between narrative and speaker based tenses, attempts to motivate a relationship among propositional and contextual meanings by proposing a direction of diachronic change via which contextual meanings arise. Fleischman's theory of tense is based on a model of language, which may be considered a variation of the processing component model of language. In this model, adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Traugott (1982), a sentence has meaning at various levels: a 'propositional' level, which includes referential meanings and grammatical functions; a 'textual' level, which includes the resources used for creating coherent discourse; an 'expressive' level, which includes the resources a language has for expressing personal attitudes, social, connotative, and affective functions; and a metalinguistic level, which includes a language's resources for talking about language itself.

In Fleischman's account, tense has meaning at each of these levels. One of Fleischman's central claims is that tense-aspect's primary function in narrative is pragmatic.²⁰ The basic import of tense at the semantic level is temporal; at the narrative level, where temporal location of events is often clearly defined by discourse context, tense's function is pragmatic. Fleischman proposes that the diachronic development of textual and contextual uses of tense follows from a principle of diachronic change, whereby meanings tend to move from the referential to the textual/expressive level (Traugott 1979, 1982).

²⁰ The ontogenesis of this function is located in the pragmatic structure of oral storytelling.

Fleischman (1990) attempts to motivate a relationship among propositional and contextual meanings by proposing a direction of diachronic change via which contextual meanings arise; however, this account does not give us a precise way of defining the relationship between the propositional/ referential, and the textual and expressive uses that a single tense-aspect morpheme serves.

1.4.5 The Present Tense

The Present tense is of central interest to a large number of studies on tense. The Present tense is especially challenging to tense theorists because of the wide range of temporal interpretations which it may receive. The Present may have a past or future interpretation; it may also occur in generic, habitual, and omnitemporal expressions, where the event time does not necessarily coincide with the moment of speech. In this section, we consider a number of strategies which have been used in an attempt to analyze the Present tense in an attempt to unify the various temporal interpretations which the Present tense may have.

1.4.5.1 The Present Tense as "timeless"

One solution to the variety of temporal interpretations which the Present tense may have is to characterize the Present tense as "timeless" and hence, appropriate in reference to any time sphere. If the Present tense is timeless, then it is appropriate for use in future, generic, habitual, and omnitemporal expressions, as well as in Past tense narrative. Bolinger (1947), who characterizes the German Present tense as "timeless", as "non-

committal about time", as expressing "merely the fact of the process", is an early example of this kind of treatment. A similar position is taken by Weinrich (1973). In Weinrich's account, the Present tense in the discussing mode is the zero tense, and does not indicate a temporal relationship. To a certain extent, the same view on the non-temporality of the Present tense in narrative is taken by Bache (1986) and Fleischman (1990).

A slightly different strategy is taken by Janssen (1990). Under Janssen's analysis, tense in Dutch expresses the speaker's actual or disactual concern for the event or entity at issue, rather than a temporal relationship. The speaker's actual/disactual concern replaces time as the basic semantic characterization of tense in Dutch. The Present tense expresses a relationship of actual concern between the vantage point of the speaker and the time of the event.

The analysis presented in this thesis may be contrasted with these approaches. Under the analysis to be presented here, tense markers always express a local time relationship between spaces.

1.4.5.2 The Eyewitness or Visualizing Present

The Historical Present is most often characterized as providing a kind of eyewitness account. This idea appears from Jespersen (1924) to Quirk (1985). With the Present tense, the speaker expresses events as if they were appearing before his/her very eyes, as if they were immediate. For Chavny (1979), the Present tense creates a visualizing, as opposed to a recounting plane, where past events are visualized as if the speaker were watching them take place.

1.4.5.3 Shift in Deictic Center

Rauh (1983) proposes that the vividness associated with the Historical Present, the feeling that the speaker is recounting the events as if were watching the actual scene, is achieved by a 'shift in the center of orientation'. Other researchers have referred to this phenomena as 'decentering' (Buhler 1967), 'shift in indexical ground' (Hanks 1990), decoupling (Talmy), and 'shift in deictic center' (Langacker 1991). With the Historical Present, the encoder gives up real center of orientation and imagines himself located within an imagined space of memory. A variation on this is that the encoder establishes a center of orientation distinct from his own center, as in the case of direct representation of speech. With the shift in orientation, the indexing (i.e. the zero-point) of tense changes, but the symbolic meanings of the tense category in question remain the same.

Similarly, Langacker (1991) proposes that the Historical Present involves a shift in the deictic center, the vantage point assumed for deictic expressions including tense.²¹ With the Historical Present, "the speaker decouples²² the deictic center from the here-and-now of the actual speech event and shifts it to another location which, in the case of the Historical Present, is specifically identified with the time and place of the events being reported" (1991:6.14). The events are presented as if they were unfolding before the speaker's very eyes, which lends the events a sort of "vividness" or immediacy.

The Historical Present is not a special meaning of the Present tense, but rather "represents a special mode of discourse in which the speaker assumes a remembered or

²¹ Other aspects of Langacker's analysis of the Simple Present tense will be considered in chapter 4.

²² The term 'decoupling' is borrowed from unpublished work of Talmy.

imagined spatio-temporal vantage point with respect to which the reported events are seen as immediate" (1991:6.14). Under Langacker's analysis, the Simple Present indicates that the event coincides exactly with the time of the speech act. With the Historical Present, each event can be construed as coinciding with the speech event, because the Historical Present involves a kind of "mental replay" of the past events.

The work presented in this thesis is consonant with Langacker's notion of 'shift in deictic center' or Rauh's notion of a 'shift in center of orientation'. The mental space counterpart to these notions is a 'shift in BASE', the BASE space being the deictic zero point. See chapter 7 for a discussion of this.

1.4.5.4 Vuillaume: Two Fictional Universes

Another interesting approach to the Historical Present and to the behavior of temporal adverbs is that of Vuillaume (1990). Vuillaume proposes the existence of two simultaneous fictions distinguished by their temporal site: a primary fiction which corresponds to the "histoire", i.e. the past fictional story, and a secondary fiction in which the past events are recreated and made to live again in the present in the mind of the reader/author. In the secondary fiction, the reader and narrator are treated as if they are direct witnesses to the event.

Vuillaume treats the two temporal planes, the past story time and the present reconstruction of the story in the mind of the hearer, as two separate events in two separate universes, distinguished only by their temporal site. The past time frame corresponds to the contents of the fiction, the past story world. The present time frame corresponds to

the saying of the author, the world brought to life by the reading. By using the Present tense for the past story, the past is brought to the present, giving the reader the sensation of descending into the past.

The metaphor which Vuillaume uses is that of the theater. While the play has not begun, the world of the spectator consists of the room and the audience, but once the play begins, the onstage scene replaces the spectator's "real world" surroundings, becoming the center of reference. The two worlds, the scene and the spectator's world exist side by side. Just as a theatrical work recreates the scenes before an audience, the fictional narrative recreates scenes in the mind of the reader. The piece of fiction evokes a past reality and resuscitates this reality at each reading, creating two temporal frames for the same event.

In the piece of fiction, the reader and narrator may move between these two systems of temporal coordinates, between the story world which is past and the secondary fiction which is present. The fictional universe may be deployed in different configurations. In the maximum deployment of the fictional universe, the story world is encoded in the past tense, and the viewpoint is a retrospective one. In the contracted or minimum deployment of the fictional universe, past tense events are encoded in the Present tense and the viewpoint is a prospective one. Vuillaume attributes the tense differences between the Past and the Present tense to the movement between the two configurations of the fictional universe.

Vuillaume's work serves as an important source of ideas and of data for the analysis of discourse-narrative given in chapter 7. The mental space system allows us to propose more than two levels of reference, each with its own hierarchical configuration of spaces. Different space configurations, each with its own deictic center, (i.e. BASE), may

exist side by side. The mental space system also allows us to capture the commonalities between the Historical Present and use of the Simple Present in direct speech, in interior monologue, in the expression of narrative point of view, and external evaluation.²³

This section has touched on general themes and trends in the tense literature which are relevant to the work undertaken here in order to provide a general setting for the work in this thesis. Before leaving this chapter, I will give the reader a road map to the overall organization of this dissertation.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

The overall structure of this dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 lays the theoretical groundwork for the discussion in the following chapters by providing an overview of mental space theory (Fauconnier 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1991, to appear). Chapter 2 introduces the mental space format and provides an overview of the basic principles of the theory: cognitive links, the Access Principle (ID Principle), domain mapping, space optimization and spreading. I discuss how spaces are built, filled, and how relationships and connections are established between spaces and between elements within different spaces, the role of linguistic elements in the cognitive construction process.

Chapter 3 presents a discourse model which provides the foundation for the discussion and analysis of tense phenomena in the subsequent chapters. This model is the final model with the maximum explanatory value. In this chapter, I define the

²³ See chapter 7 for a discussion of these issues.

theoretical discourse primitives which will be central to the discussion of tense and discourse organization, {BASE, FOCUS, V-POINT, EVENT}, and propose a set of discourse organization principles which operate on these conceptual primitives, determining the possible types of space configurations which can be built. I propose characterizations of putatively universal, cross-linguistic tense-aspect categories {PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE, PERFECT, PROGRESSIVE, IMPERFECTIVE, PERFECTIVE}. These categories are discourse construction notions, which operate at the level of cognitive construction. Each tense-aspect category is a universal type of local link between spaces, which may combine together with other links in various ways. Links or set of links form an access path to a target space, and may map onto and be encoded by the grammatical markers of a particular language. Chapter 3 gives a general overview of the discourse management role which tense-aspect plays in the discourse interpretation process, showing how tense-aspect functions to constrain the mental space configuration built during the process of discourse interpretation; how the discourse links and space partitioning separate information in time, in status as FOCUS or non-FOCUS, and as FACT or PREDICTION; and how spaces may be accessed and reaccessed via alternate paths.

In chapter 4, a detailed analysis of language specific tense markers is given. Chapter 4 shows how the discourse links {PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE, PERFECT, PROGRESSIVE, IMPERFECTIVE, PERFECTIVE} map onto language specific markers in French and English, and how these discourse notions can motivate a wide variety of distributional and semantic properties of language specific tense markers. Chapter 4 is particularly concerned with sentence level tense data including: the Present tense for future events; habitual and generic expressions; the behavior of tense in conditional protasis; tense in counterfactuals and politeness forms; properties of the

different English Future forms; use of Future tenses for suppositions about the occurrence of current or past events; the cooccurrence restrictions on time adverbs and the Perfect tenses at both the sentence and discourse level; use of the French *Passé Composé* for present, past, and future events; and the contrastive distribution of the French *Imparfait* and *Passé Simple*, *Plus-que-parfait* and *Passé Antérieur*.

Chapter 5 investigates the behavior of tense in both the protasis ('if clause') and apodosis ('then clause') of conditional constructions. Conditional constructions are analyzed as setting up a hypothetical domain which functions as an informational frame with mapping potential. The protasis defines the conditions under which the apodosis may optimize out of the hypothetical domain and anchor onto speaker reality, i.e. transfer out of the hypothetical domain into the "reality" domain. Chapter 5 shows how this analysis can account not only for the behavior of tense in the protasis, but also for very fine grained semantic effects of tense in the apodosis. Under this analysis, the Simple Past and Pluperfect in the protases of counterfactual constructions function to block optimization (i.e. transfer) of the apodosis to speaker reality, and to limit the type of apodoses which can be embedded in the counterfactual domain. Chapter 5 also investigates in detail the mental space structures set up for various types of conditional constructions and the access of tense within these structures.

The behavior of tense in embedded clauses of speech verbs, as well as in relative clauses is the subject of chapter 6. Chapter 6 examines the access properties of embedded clauses, and the special access properties of spaces in an embedded speech domain. I propose a number of special properties for the spaces set up for the interpretation of indirect speech. I propose that spaces in the speech domain are assigned a *FACT/PREDICTION* status in relation to a *V-POINT* role set up in the initial speech

space, a V-POINT role associated with the experiencer or the reported speaker. I show how tense may be accessed from either the V-POINT/BASE or from the V-POINT in the initial speech space. I propose a FACT/PREDICTION Principle which operates when two V-POINTS are engaged, forcing a certain level of V-POINT consistency with regard to tense choice in relation to the two V-POINTS. The FACT/PREDICTION Principle rules out access from V-POINT/BASE where the space would be assigned a FACT/PREDICTION status from V-POINT/BASE inconsistent with that assigned by the V-POINT of the experiencer or reported speaker.

Chapter 7 shows how narrative may be set up with various levels of reference, each with its own BASE/V-POINT from which tense and other deictic elements are accessed. We examine the types of potential BASEs which may be set up and the role which the Present tense plays in signalling shifts in BASE. Chapter 7 also investigates the effect of a non-shared deictic center (between speaker and hearer) on tense behavior and considers the status of the author and reader in the text. The use of the Present tense to encode direct speech, interior monologue (Imbs 1960), focalization shifts (Genette 1980), shifts in narrative point of view, and author evaluation are analyzed as involving a 'shift in BASE'. The Historical or Narrative Present is also analyzed as involving a 'shift in BASE'. I show how this shift is a shift of the entire tense system, not just a specialized use of the present tense. We also examine the relationship which may be established between different BASEs, and the subjective feelings which may arise as a result of the pragmatic links established between different V-POINTS.

The dissertation concludes with chapter 8, which provides a summary of the proposed discourse model and the mental space account of tense presented in chapters 3 through 7. Chapter 8 recapitulates the central claims of the analysis, and situates the

analysis in terms of its contribution to mental space theory and to the literature on tense.