

Quotative Reference in Reportive *comme* Clauses

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Abstract

In this paper we propose a truth-conditional account for the uncommon kind of reference and coherence involved in French reportive *comme* clauses (RCCs). We show that on the one hand these constructions are fairly similar to “standard” parenthetical clauses, and that on the other hand they feature a specific behaviour which can be accounted for by relating them to the French comparative *comme*-constructions. We will exploit and extend the notion of speech acts as integrated in the SDRT framework.

1 Data on French reportive *comme*-clauses

Among the paradigm of French *comme* constructions, the reportive¹ *comme* clauses (RCCs) are means to report—or quote—utterances, talk, words, etc., in an indirect fashion. Some examples are given in (1) where the RCCs are underlined.

- (1) a. Le chômage a augmenté, comme l’avait prévu *Le Monde*.
“Unemployment rose, as *Le Monde* predicted.”
b. Les pluies gagneront la côte ouest ce soir, comme l’a dit le journaliste.
“Rain will reach the West coast this evening, as the journalist said.”
c. La situation est « ubuesque », comme dit Jean.
“The situation is ‘Ubuesque’, as Jean says.”
d. C’est une décision *politically correct*, comme disent les Américains.
“It is a *politically correct* decision, as the Americans say.”

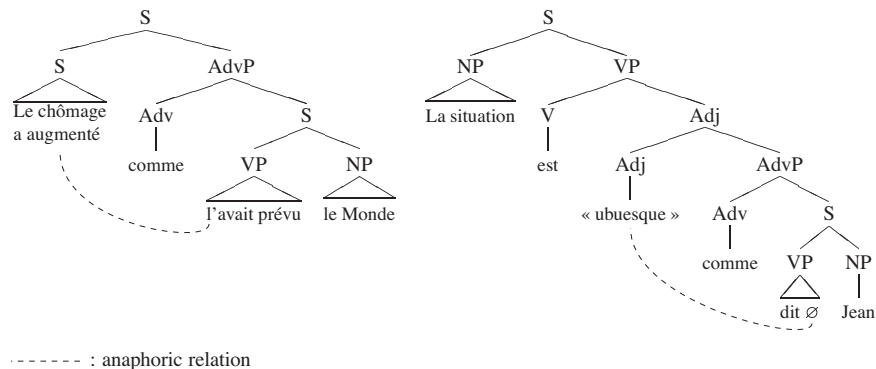
First we want to emphasise the distinction between these constructions and possible homonymous adverbials of manner. For instance, as an RCC, (1a) won’t receive the following reading: *Le chômage a augmenté de la manière dont Le Monde avait prévu qu’il augmenterait* (*Unemployment rose the way Le Monde predicted it would*). The expected reportive reading would rather be: *Le chômage a augmenté, ce que Le Monde avait prévu* (*Unemployment rose, which Le Monde predicted*). Besides, unlike manner adverbials, RCCs only occur with a specific sort of verbs (henceforth RCC-verbs) that denote speech acts (*dire/say, affirmer/claim, annon-*

¹ The term ‘reportive’ is borrowed from Lapointe (1991).

cer/announce, *prévoir*/predict, etc.) or some propositional attitudes (*croire*/believe, *penser*/think, *supposer*/suppose, etc.).

Furthermore Desmets and Roussarie (2000) showed that there are two different uses for RCCs. We call the first one propositional reports, e.g. (1a), (1b); it is the case when the speaker makes a quotation in substance, i.e. (s)he reports the meaning of someone else's speech. The formal parameter for this use is the presence of a clitic object (*le, l'*) on the RCC-verb. The other use will be called verbatim reports, e.g. (1c), (1d); it is the case when the speaker quotes literally (or verbatim). The formal parameter here is that there is no overt object for the RCC-verb. Note that depending on whether *l'/le* is present or not, (1b) will thus have one or the other reading.²

Desmets and Roussarie (2000) and Desmets (2001) account for RCCs as parenthetical adjunct clauses, and more precisely as AdvP free relative clauses (see next figure). RCCs exhibit an obligatory anaphoric relation between the object argument of the repetitive verb and an element of the main clause (or the main clause itself).



² The distinction we make between *propositional* and *verbatim* is reminiscent of the well-known *de re* vs. *de dicto* distinction. However, we do not want to commit ourselves to identifying the two distinctions, since for instance, in an RCC such as:

- (i) Il y a un assassin dans le groupe, comme l'a annoncé l'inspecteur.
 "There is a murderer among the group, as the detective announced."

one may see, *besides* the propositional reading, a "remnant" of a *de re* vs. *de dicto* ambiguity: either there is someone among the group of whom the detective said that (s)he is a murderer (*de re*), or the detective said that someone among the group is a murderer (*de dicto*). Due to space limitations we cannot develop this issue here and as a precaution we will confine ourselves to the terms *propositional* and *verbatim*.

It has also been noticed that the *comme*-phrase shows a presupposition-like behaviour. First, it is unaffected by a negation on the matrix. For instance, with a reportive reading, (2) cannot entail the negation of the RCC.

- (2) Le chômage n'a pas augmenté, comme l'avait prévu *Le Monde*.

“Unemployment didn't rise, as *Le Monde* predicted.”

-/→

Soit le chômage n'a pas augmenté, soit *Le Monde* ne l'avait pas prévu.

“Either unemployment didn't rise, or *Le Monde* didn't predict it.”

Similarly, it turns out that the meaning of an RCC does not fall within the scope of the condition relation when it is embedded in the antecedent of a conditional, as in (3).

- (3) Si la bourse s'est effondrée, comme l'a prévu *Le Monde*, alors Max est ruiné.

“If the Stock Market crashed, as *Le Monde* predicted, then Max is ruined.”

-/→

Si la bourse s'est effondrée et que *Le Monde* l'a prévu, alors Max est ruiné.

“If the Stock Market crashed and if *Le Monde* predicted it, then Max is ruined.”

The entailment failure in (3) was taken by Wilson (1975) as a test for non truth-conditional meaning of constituents. Yet we will not draw such a conclusion from the test: we rather agree with the argument Asher (2000) gave for parentheticals, claiming that the ‘conditional embedding’ test merely shows that the semantic contribution of the constituent in question (i.e. the RCC) should be neither accounted for in terms of a flat conjunctive structure (*main_clause* \wedge *rcc*) nor accounted for in terms of a complex sentence with a subordinate clause (*rcc(that main_clause)*)³. What we want to advocate here is that RCCs, as well as parentheticals and presuppositions, connect to the surrounding material at a ‘specific level’ and that nonetheless they fit into the truth-conditional semantic structure of the discourse. In this respect, we will propose an analysis in the SDRT framework, inspired by Asher's treatment of parentheticals. In the next section, we will first give a brief overview of the formal basis of SDRT and then sketch Asher's (2000) proposals.

³ We cannot claim that an RCC sentence is semantically equivalent to a complex sentence such as *Le Monde avait prévu que le chômage augmenterait* “Le Monde predicted that unemployment would rise” because the complex sentence does satisfy the entailment in the ‘conditional embedding’ test.

2 Parentheticals in SDRT

2.1 SDRT in a nutshell

SDRT (Segmented Discourse Representation Theory) was introduced in Asher (1993) as an extension of DRT (Discourse Representation Theory, Kamp & Reyle (1993)) in order to account for specific properties of discourse structure. SDRT can be viewed as a super-layer on DRT whose expressiveness is enhanced by the use of discourse relations holding between DRT structures (Discourse Representation Structures or DRS).

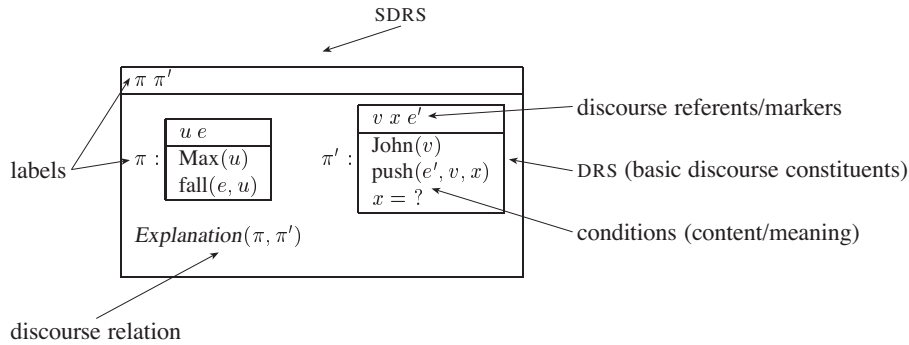
An SDRS (Segmented DRS) is a pair of sets $\langle \mathbf{U}, \mathbf{Con} \rangle$. \mathbf{U} is a set of labels of DRS or SDRS. \mathbf{Con} is a set of conditions on labels of the form:

- $\pi : K$, where π is a label from \mathbf{U} and K is a (S)DRS (labelling);
- $R(\pi_i, \pi_j)$, where π_i and π_j are labels and R is a discourse relation (structuring).

The set of SDRT relations includes Narration (for temporal sequence), Background (for temporal overlap), Elaboration (for whole-part or topic-development), Explanation and Result (for causation), Commentary (for gloss), Evidence (for support) etc. Normally, discourse relations are inferred non-monotonically by means of a defeasible glue logic exploiting lexical and world knowledge (see e.g. Asher and Lascarides 1998).

As an example, we illustrate below the sdr-theoretic representation for the famous explanatory discourse in (4).

(4) Max fell. John pushed him.

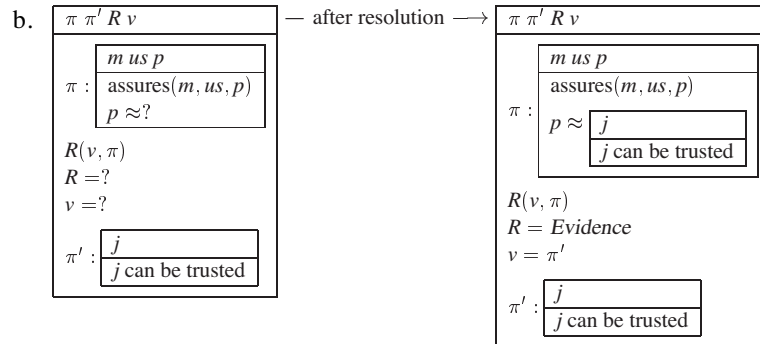


SDRS for (4).

2.2 Asher’s account for parentheticals

Asher (2000) turned his attention to parenthetical constructions such as (5a) with a view to giving them a truth-conditional (model-theoretic) analysis (or “how to put parentheticals in the logical form?”). In essence, Asher’s analysis states that parentheticals are connected to the surrounding assertion (i.e. the context) by means of discourse relations. For instance, (5a) will be represented as in (5b), where π labels the parenthetical constituent (*Mary assures us*) and π' labels the main assertion (*John can be trusted*). Such an account is appealing since it avoids conjunction and subordination, unwanted for the reasons discussed above.

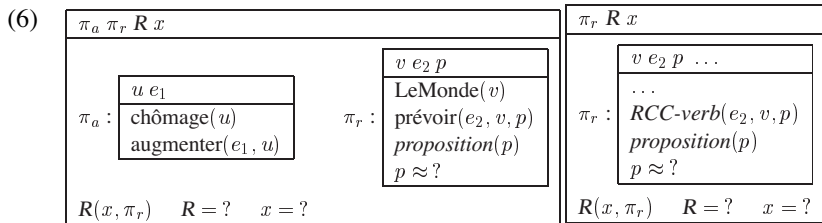
(5) a. John, Mary assures us, can be trusted.



3 Propositional reports

3.1 A discourse-based account

As for propositional RCCs, such as (1a–b), a discourse-based account mirroring Asher’s treatment seems to fit the description of the properties featured in §2. Consequently, we propose that the left-hand SDRs in (6) should be the SDR-theoretic representation for (1a) and that the right-hand SDRs should be the generic SDR-theoretic representation for propositional RCCs.



The discourse segmentation between the RCC (π_r) and its host (π_a) explains why the negation in (2) has narrow scope, insofar as the negative operator is construed compositionally within the main clause. And when an RCC is included in a complex conditional sentence as in (3), it can remain outside the Condition relation that stands merely between the antecedent (π_a) and the consequent.

Now some underspecified conditions have to be resolved, namely : $p \approx ?$ (the anaphoric resolution of the propositional argument of the RCC verb), $x = ?$ (the discourse site attachment for the RCC) and $R = ?$ (the discourse relation connecting the RCC to the context). The marker p refers to an intensional structure (answering “what did *Le Monde* predict?”), i.e. it must be of the propositional type. This type restriction is indicated in the RCC representation by the condition *proposition*(p) and it is required by the lexical entry of some verbal lexemes such as *prévoir*, *dire*... (cf. Asher 1993 about the restriction *proposition*(p) and the characterisation relation \approx). In the simple case, as in (6), we will have $p \approx K_a$, where K_a is the DRS such that $\pi_a : K_a$.⁴ This follows from the standard anaphora resolution processing in (S)DRT, given that the only accessible proposition in (6) is the one labelled by π_a . Next, it can be observed that in complex sentential context (e.g. conditionals), an RCC seems to have scope only over its syntactic host. In other words the anaphoric argument p should be identified with the antecedent of the conditional (7a) and not with the entire assertion (7b)⁵.

(7) a. Si, comme je te le_i conseille, [tu viens]_i, tu auras une surprise.

⁴ Actually, *Le Monde* probably predicted *le chômage augmentera* (“unemployment will rise”), and not *le chômage a augmenté* (“unemployment rose”). But this phenomenon can generally be observed with the resolution of abstract anaphora; cf. *Le chômage a augmenté. Le Monde l’avait prévu.* (“Unemployment rose. *Le Monde* predicted it.”) We won’t develop that question here, as it is not specific to RCCs.

⁵ Except when the RCC occurs in very initial position as in *Comme Le Monde l’a bien prévu, si la bourse s’effondre, les petits porteurs seront ruinés* (“As *Le Monde* did predict, if the stock-market crashes, small shareholders will be ruined”).

- “If, as I advise you to, you come, you’ll have a surprise.”
- b. ?? [Si, comme je t’en/te préviens \emptyset_i , tu entres, je te frappe]_i.
“If, as I’m warning you, you enter, I hit you.”
- c. [Si, je te préviens \emptyset_i , tu entres, je te frappe]_i.
“If, I’m warning you, you enter, I’ll hit you.”

This behavior seems to be a peculiarity of RCCs that differ from other parentheticals which may have wide scope (7c), as mentioned by Asher (2000). The explanation we propose is that, given the syntactic account for RCCs given in Desmets and Roussarie (2000) and Desmets (2001), and given that they are to receive a discourse-based treatment, RCCs turn out to attach to their syntactic hosts in a more compositional—and therefore less defeasible—way. In other words, the underspecification $x = ?$ is likely to resolve into $x = \pi_a$, where π_a labels the clausal constituent the RCC is adjoined to.

Finally we have to resolve $R = ?$, i.e. which discourse relation has to be selected in order to render the rhetorical attachment of RCCs. In a way, it is not essential to determine the name of R (Commentary?, Evidence?, Background?).⁶ We decide not to commit ourselves and we will just provisionally call it R-Comme. Indeed, what does matter is the specific contribution made by *comme*. This contribution can be seen by contrasting RCCs with other types of parentheticals (comment clauses).

3.2 RCCs vs. comment clauses

So far, RCCs and comment clauses fall under roughly the same analysis. And indeed they look quite similar, as it is shown with the quasi-paraphrases in (8).

- (8) a. Le chômage a augmenté, comme l’avait prévu *Le Monde*.
“Unemployment rose, as *Le Monde* predicted.”
- b. Le chômage, *Le Monde* l’avait prévu, a augmenté.
“Unemployment, *Le Monde* predicted it, rose.”

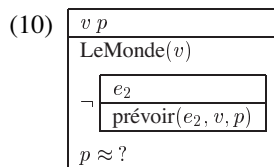
However a negated RCC (9a) sounds odd, whereas a negated parenthetical comment clauses (9b) is quite felicitous, on a par with the paratactic (multisentential) juxtaposition (9c).

⁶ E.g. Asher (2000) proposes Background then Evidence for:

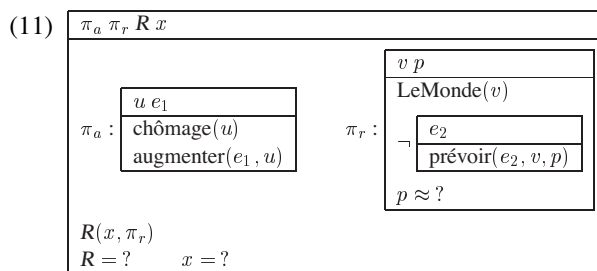
- (i) If the party, as Mary assures us, is over, then we should find somewhere else to get a drink.

- (9) a. * Le chômage a augmenté, comme ne l'avait pas prévu *Le Monde*.
 "Unemployment rose, as *Le Monde* didn't predict."
 b. Le chômage, *Le Monde* ne l'avait pas prévu, a augmenté.
 "Unemployment, *Le Monde* didn't predict it, rose."
 c. Le chômage a augmenté. *Le Monde* ne l'avait pas prévu.
 "Unemployment rose. *Le Monde* didn't predict it."

In (S)DRT, the content of the negated parenthetical (*Le Monde ne l'avait pas prévu*) will be represented as follows⁷:



Hence the tentative analysis we proposed in §4.1 will give (11) as a representation for a negated parenthetical or RCC.



(11) is the representation for (9b); but it does not predict appropriately the fact that (9a) is not felicitous. Actually, RCCs are not mere comment clauses: there is an additional semantic contribution of *comme*. That is what we aim to account for now. For this purpose, we will exploit the intrinsic semantics of *comme*. Following Desmets (2001), we consider that *comme* is an operator which enables one to set up a comparison of two properties. Hence we propose a solution that brings the semantics of RCCs to an identity of events properties, that is: a comparison on events. We

⁷ The referent p is out of the negated sub-DRS because it is a presupposed definite NP; see Kamp & Reyle (1993), van der Sandt (1992).

therefore begin with some remarks on how speech acts and events are dealt with in SDRT.

3.3 Events and speech acts.

An RCC-verb such as *prévoir* (meaning *prédire* “predict”) denotes a type of speech act. Speech acts are acts, i.e. actions, therefore they are events. This is reflected in usual DR-structures by using the Davidsonian notation (Davidson 1967), e.g.: $\text{prévoir}(e_2, \nu p)$, where the term e_2 ‘refers’ to an event-entity of the model. So here, e_2 is actually a speech act discourse referent. Now that notion of speech act discourse referent also appears elsewhere in the sdrt framework: it is related to the referents π which label (S)DRSS and on which discourse relations hold. See what Asher and Lascarides say about it:

[T]he label π is a discourse referent, which we call a ‘speech act discourse referent’ since it labels a DRS.

Asher and Lascarides (1998)

[...] types of relational speech acts are in fact rhetorical relations. [...] the rhetorical relations in SDRT are all speech act types: the second term of the relation is a speech act of the appropriate type relative to its discourse context, which of course includes the first term in the relation.

Asher and Lascarides (2001)

Let’s take an example. Suppose that a discourse representation (an SDRS) contains the rhetorical relation Elaboration connecting two discourse constituents labelled by π_1 and π_2 . From the speech act point of view and according to Asher and Lascarides (2001), the SDR-condition $\text{Elaboration}(\pi_1, \pi_2)$ then stands for ‘ π_2 is an elaboration act of π_1 , performed by an agent (the speaker)’ or ‘an agent (the speaker) performed π_2 , which is an elaboration of π_1 .’ Therefore we will consider the discourse relation $\text{Elaboration}(\pi_1, \pi_2)$ as a shorthand for the predicate $\text{elaborate}(\pi_2, A, \pi_1)$, where agent A is the speaker, which is not that far from, e.g.: $\text{prévoir/predict}(e, x, p)$ or $\text{dire/say}(e, x, p)$. Furthermore, as long as a discourse relation R is veridical⁸, the conditions $R(\pi_1, \pi_2)$ and $\pi_2 : K_2$ entail the general statement: $\text{assert}(\pi_2, A, \hat{K}_2)$, or: $\text{assert}(\pi_2, A, p_2) \wedge p_2 \approx K_2$. In other words, when a speaker performs a speech act π_2

⁸ A discourse relation R is veridical if the terms it relates are true, that is if $R(\pi_1, \pi_2) \rightarrow \nu \pi_1 \wedge \nu \pi_2$. See e.g. Asher and Lascarides (1998). Recall that $\hat{}$ and ν are the intension and extension operators, respectively.

which is typed by veridical R , then at the same time (s)he performs an assertion whose propositional content is described by the DRS K_2 . Hence we can postulate a type analogy between the e -like and the π -like discourse referents: both refer to events; e stands for events of any kind (or eventualities) and π stands for the speaker's speech acts.

Manner of events. Formally we will consider that a property of event (i.e. a manner of event) is a restriction on the extension of e . Thus $\lambda e \Phi(e)$ is a 'manner of e ', cf. for instance: λe brillamment/brilliantly(e). Now equative comparison on events can be formalised as an identity of manner-predicate on two evential entities.

- *Hypothesis for identity of manner of e and e' :* $\exists \Phi, \Psi (\Phi(e) \wedge \Psi(e') \wedge \Phi = \Psi)$.

Our notation can be summed up by the single predicate Φ -comparable(e, e'), meaning e and e' are identical—or similar—relatively to the property Φ . In other words, there is a restriction Φ on e and a restriction Ψ on e' , and it is the case that Φ and Ψ have the same extension.

It is now possible to represent the semantic structure of an adverbial of manner such as (12a) by means of a Φ -comparison (12b).

- (12) a. Luc a joué comme Max (a joué).
 “Luc played like Max/as Max did.”

b.

u	v	e_1	e_2	
Luc(u)				
jouer(e_1, u)				
Max(v)				
jouer(e_2, v)				
$\Phi(e_1) \quad \Psi(e_2) \quad \Phi = \Psi$				

Here is the predicative-partial DRS corresponding to the lexical entry for *comme*:

- (13) *comme*: $\lambda P \lambda e' \lambda Q \lambda e$
- | | | |
|------------|-----------|---------------|
| $P(e)$ | $Q(e')$ | |
| $\Phi(e')$ | $\Psi(e)$ | $\Phi = \Psi$ |

By λ -conversion, the RCC in (1a) will be represented as below. The right-hand SDRS is a SDR-theoretic transcription of the result of the composition in the left-hand DRS, where λ -abstractions have been replaced by underspecified conditions (we will call that DRT-to-SDRT translation a parenthetical promotion).

(14)

comme l'avait prévu *Le Monde*: $\lambda P \lambda e$

$v \ e_2 \ p \ (\Phi \ \Psi)$
$P(e)$
$LeMonde(v)$
$prévoir(e_2, v, p)$
$p \approx ?$
$\Phi(e_2) \ \Psi(e) \ \Phi = \Psi$

$\pi_r \ x$
$v \ e_2 \ p \ e$
$LeMonde(v)$
$prévoir(e_2, v, p)$
$p \approx ?$
$\Phi(e_2) \ \Psi(e) \ \Phi = \Psi$
$e = ?$
$R-Comme(x, \pi_r) \ x = ?$

This representation can be read as follow : *Le Monde* made a prediction (e_2) and this act of predicting is like (*comme*) another act, e , which then must be bound in the context just like any anaphora. Our point is that the appropriate antecedent for e is the referent of the main assertive speech act, that is π_a . Therefore $e = \pi_a$ and $x = \pi_a$. Thus, in words, our account can be restated as: the speaker asserts that p , just as *Le Monde* predicted that p .

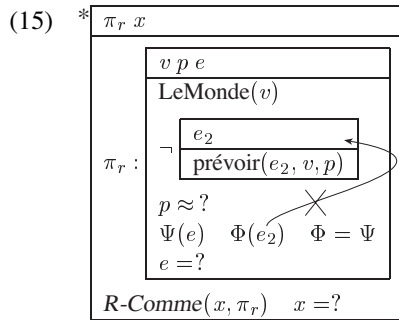
The anaphoric resolutions of e and x to π_a go together and can be predicted compositionally from the syntactic analysis: an RCC is an adjunct clause on the main clause and it implies that x is identified with π_a . As for e , two antecedent applicants are available (for instance in (6)): e_1 which is the event of unemployment rising and which stands for the main event of the main clause, and π_a which is the speech act referent of the main clause performed by the speaker. Identifying e with e_1 is not formally impossible, but that would bring about a certain oddity: it would amount to comparing an evolution of unemployment and a prediction by *Le Monde*. It is better to compare what is comparable; e , e_2 and e_1 are indeed all events, but beyond that, they have about nothing in common. On the other hand, π_a is also an event and more precisely a speech act, as well as e_2 and e . Therefore it is possible to state a rule aimed at optimising the coherence in a comparison.

- *Comparing-comparable Preference*: If x and y are Φ -compared, then resolve the underspecification $y = ?$ by choosing among the available possible antecedents the one which is the closest to x in a sort hierarchy.

Next the resolution of $p \approx ?$ follows from the analogy between e_2 (via e) and π_a : the relation between p and e_2 is the same as the one between the DRS labelled by π_a and π_a . So it is normal for p to be characterised by the same content as the DRS labelled by π_a .

Right prediction for wrong (9a). As required the negated *comme*-clause in (9a)—*comme ne l'avait pas prévu Le Monde*—cannot be construed as an RCC.

Indeed e_2 which is supposed to be Φ -compared turns out to be unavailable to the comparison operator since it is introduced in the negated sub-DRS.



4 Verbatim reports

Let us now go back to what we have called the verbatim reports. We recall some examples below:

- (1) c. La situation est « ubuesque », comme dit Jean.
 “The situation is ‘Ubuesque’, as Jean says.”
 d. C’est une décision *politically correct*, comme disent les Américains.
 “It is a politically correct decision, as the Americans say.”
- (16) Il se lécha les « douas », comme écrit Raymond Queneau.
 “He licked his ‘douas’ (for doigts = fingers), as Raymond Queneau writes.”

The main difference between propositional and verbatim reports is that, in the latter, the (non overt) argument of the RCC-verb does not seem to refer to the propositional meaning of the main clause but rather to a mere piece of speech or a string of the surrounding utterance (i.e. the phrases *ubuesque* in (1c), *politically correct* in (1d), and *douas* in (16)). It is a particular kind of anaphoric relation which should receive a specific treatment.

4.1 Verbatim reference

We will use the term of verbatim reference to designate the case when the second argument of verbs like *dire/say*, *écrire/write*, *s’exclamer/exclaim*, etc. is a message⁹, i.e. an utterance seen as a sequence of words, phonemes or graphemes, etc. We will

⁹ We use *message* in its Jakobsonian meaning, Jakobson (1960).

assume here a further lexical entry for *dire*, for “*x dire y*”, where *y* is a message of any kind. And in order to express the distinction between that *verbatim-dire* and propositional-*dire* as in (1b), we will use the restrictive condition *verbatim(y)* to constrain the type of the object argument of *dire*, just as we had *proposition(p)* in (6) for the propositional use of RCC-verbs.¹⁰

(17) $\lambda y \lambda e \lambda x$

$\text{dire}_2(e, x, y)$
$\text{verbatim}(y)$

Now, we have means to represent any message uttering event in the logical form. For instance *John said ‘Oops!’* will yield $\text{say}_2(e, j, \text{"Oops!"})$, and (1c) will receive a representation fairly unified with the representation for propositional RCCs.

(1) c. La situation est « ubuesque », comme dit Jean.

(18)

$\pi_a \pi_r R$											
$\pi_a :$ <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;">$u \ s$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$\text{situation}(u)$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$\text{ubuesque}(s, u)$</td></tr></table>	$u \ s$	$\text{situation}(u)$	$\text{ubuesque}(s, u)$	$\pi_r :$ <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;">$v \ e_1 \ y$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$\text{Jean}(v)$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$\text{dire}_2(e_1, v, y)$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$\text{verbatim}(y)$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$y = ?$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$\Phi(e_1) \quad \Psi(e) \quad \Phi = \Psi$</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 2px;">$e = ?$</td></tr></table>	$v \ e_1 \ y$	$\text{Jean}(v)$	$\text{dire}_2(e_1, v, y)$	$\text{verbatim}(y)$	$y = ?$	$\Phi(e_1) \quad \Psi(e) \quad \Phi = \Psi$	$e = ?$
$u \ s$											
$\text{situation}(u)$											
$\text{ubuesque}(s, u)$											
$v \ e_1 \ y$											
$\text{Jean}(v)$											
$\text{dire}_2(e_1, v, y)$											
$\text{verbatim}(y)$											
$y = ?$											
$\Phi(e_1) \quad \Psi(e) \quad \Phi = \Psi$											
$e = ?$											
$R\text{-Comme}(\pi_a, \pi_r)$											

Now the resolution of the underspecified conditions has to be taken from a slightly different perspective with respect to the *verbatim* reference. The problem can be put as follows:

- which antecedent for *y*? how to access a message in (S)DRT?
- which antecedent for *e*? which speech act is *e*₁ Φ -comparable with?

4.2 Utterance acts

First recall that, according to Searle (1969), when a speaker utters a sentence, three distinct kinds of acts are performed, namely: (a) uttering words (morphemes, sen-

¹⁰ Note that we have the entailment: $\text{dire}_2(e, x, y) \rightarrow \text{dire}_1(e, x, p)$, where *p* refers to the propositional content construed from the message *y* (as long as *y* corresponds to a meaningful utterance).

tences), i.e. performing utterance acts; (b) referring and predicating, i.e. performing propositional acts; and (c) stating, questioning, commanding, promising, etc., i.e. performing illocutionary acts. It turns out that predicates as *dire*₂ (= performing a message) denote those utterance acts. In other words, verbatim reports involve the utterance act side of speech acts.

In the present framework (SDRT), it has been claimed that DRSS depict propositional acts and that discourse relations express types of illocutionary acts. Now what about utterance acts? They are realised via linguistic objects structured with respect to phonetics, phonology, (or typography), morphology and even syntax. But normally, they are not expected to appear in the DR-theoretic representation because they are mainly related to the ‘physical material’ of the utterance and SDRSS are just concerned with the logical form and the discourse organisation.¹¹ Yet verbatim reports appear to be clear examples of a semantic anaphoric relationship between an argumental slot of a verb and the metalinguistic reference to a constituent of the context. For instance in (1c), the grammatical antecedent of the non-overt object of *dire* is *ubuesque*, but the semantic argument of *dire* is not the denotatum of the adjective *ubuesque*, it is the word *ubuesque* itself.

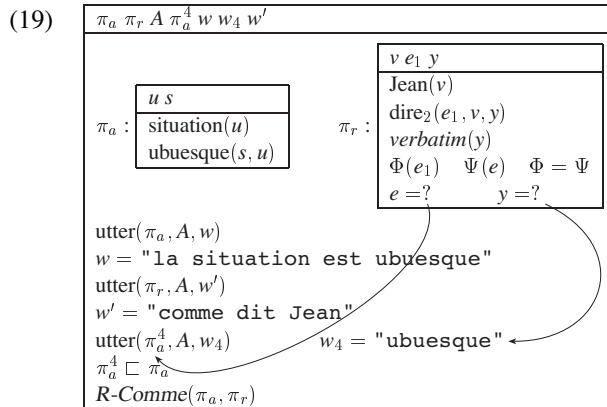
So our proposal consists in inserting the required utterance acts—and referents to them—‘somewhere’ into the logical form i.e. SDRSS. Actually we need not add a new kind of referents into the universes of SDRSS because an utterance act is just one side of a same communicative phenomenon that we have called ‘speech act’ so far. Speech act referents already occur in SDRSS and we will only provide additional qualifying conditions on π -like referents so that they can be handled from the ‘utterance act’ point of view.

Those conditions are of the form: $\text{utter}(\pi, A, Y)$, where π is an utterance of Y performed by agent A . Y is a message uttered by A ; it must satisfy the verbatim restriction. For instance, we note: $\text{utter}(\pi, A, \text{"Max fell"})$, in order to represent the sentence *Max fell* (uttered by the speaker A). Furthermore, note that the utterance act is distributive over the composition of the message. Indeed if A uttered *Max fell*, then he uttered *Max* and he uttered *fell*. That is why we need to state the following hypothesis.

- *Hypothesis on utterance acts*: $\text{utter}(E, A, Y) \rightarrow \forall y$ that is a part of speech of Y ($\exists \varepsilon, \text{utter}(\varepsilon, A, y) \wedge \varepsilon \subseteq E$). That is: if A utters Y , then A utters each part (of speech) of Y .

¹¹ One notable exception is the use of ‘names of concepts’ by Asher (1993, Chap. 3). But they don’t seem to relate directly to the notion of utterance acts within the Searlian triad.

By means of that device, we can now propose a unified SDR-theoretic representation for the verbatim reports (1c) in the SDRS (19). Here again, the resolution of the antecedents of y and e is syntax-driven. When the antecedent of e is known, we know which antecedent y must be bound to. It must be the message argument of the utterance act identified by e .



5 Conclusion

We proposed a unified account for RCCs which may be integrated into a general analysis of the French comparative *comme*-constructions. We have shown that specific kinds of quotative references can be dealt with in SDRT, provided that SDRT is handled as a truth-conditional theory of speech acts in discourse. Our proposals, following the Searlian tripartition of speech acts (utterance / propositional / illocutionary acts), can be viewed as a way of extending SDRT toward a complete and (hopefully) sound formal speech acts theory. The treatment we sketched here deserves further developments, for instance in order to elaborate consistently a model theoretic analysis drawn in keeping with a more detailed morpho-syntactic description.

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