

Are there several types of delocutive derivation in French?

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Abstract

In this paper we revisit the concept of “delocutive derivation”, originally explored by several French linguists, viz. Benveniste, Ducrot, Anscombre, Récanati. Thus, even though the early attempts to “theorize” the concept seem convincing, in this paper we argue for a clarification of the delocutive derivation *process*, which is seen as a unique procedure, parameterized in several ways, instead of being instantiated in a plethora of different derivation processes, as proposed especially by Anscombre. Furthermore, the proposal is given a procedural description that is contrasted with a similar attempt of Récanati. Finally, this new procedure is used for re-analyzing most of Anscombre’s linguistic data a more unified manner than in previous accounts.

1 Introduction

There are some constructions in French where the meaning and / or form seem to be derived from other lexemes or locutions. Such constructions were called by Benveniste, in the case of verbs, *delocutives* (Benveniste, 1966). Further French research efforts have refined Benveniste’s account in two directions: first, the baseline delocutive derivation mechanism was generalized to other parts of speech than verbs; secondly, the derivation process itself was analyzed in thorough detail and several types of delocutive derivation were proposed.

This paper tries to show that these several types of delocutive derivation are in fact mere “parameterizations” of the same unique process, optionally applied sequentially. Thus, we will spell out the general form of the delocutive derivation process,

and its various parameters, as well as the way the particular derivation processes are obtained from this general framework.

The forefront researcher that continued Benveniste’s work on delocutive verbs was Anscombre, who developed his ideas in several papers throughout the ’80s (Anscombre, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1985). Thus, he first proposed that interjections, adverbs or even nouns can be delocutively derived (e.g. “Un sauve-qui-peut”, i.e. “a generalized and disorganized evasion/runaway”). Secondly, he proposed that several types of delocutive derivation exist: (i) lexical derivation, which can be either synchronic or diachronic (Anscombre, 1985), (ii) formulaic delocutivity (“délocutivité formulaire”), and (iii) generalized delocutivity (Anscombre, 1980, 1981).

Anscombre’s research gave birth to several developments and criticisms. For instance, de Cornulier proposed to distinguish a further delocutive process, where the same lexeme is semantically “re-read” (in French “relu”) by *allusion* to an original meaning (de Cornulier, 1976). This new process is called *auto-delocutivity*. Furthermore, Ducrot himself worked on the connection between delocutively-derived and *performative* expressions, proposing a mechanism whereby performative constructions occur via mechanisms that are akin to (or rather the consequence of) the delocutive derivation (Ducrot, 1980, 1981). However, these works have also been criticized, especially by Récanati, who argued that (Anscombre and) Ducrot’s conventionalism was too “radical”, in the sense that it moved too far away from any veri-conditional account on meaning (Récanati, 1987, 2002).

Another, more recent, research strand, however less related to the goals of this paper, is represented by the usage of the delocutive derivation account (especially in its basic form, proposed by Benveniste) for other languages than French. Thus, Plank puts forth a cross-linguistic study of the Benvenistian delocutive derivation of verbs (Plank, 2005). Likewise, Larcher performed a thorough “benchmark” of Anscombre’s delocutivity derivation mechanisms on Arabic (Larcher, 1985). Finally, Haïk’s study on the “kiss goodbye” English expression, although rather syntactic (in a generative framework), provides some connections to Anscombre and de Cornulier’s delocutivities (Haïk, 2009).

Before dwelling in further detail on the various delocutive derivation processes, we will first illustrate the basic phenomenon (in Anscombre’s account) via a simple, but representative example. Let us assume that the French word “bigre” (that is, a subtle and cunning villain that knows how to come out well from the most confusing situations) is first used in its original sense, as indicated between parentheses. This means that we adopt as a primitive the fact that the basic meaning of “bigre” is, roughly:

$\llbracket \text{bigre} \rrbracket ::= \text{individual} :: X; \text{situation} :: Y \quad : \text{subtle}(X) \wedge \text{cunning}(X) \wedge \text{villain}(X) \wedge$

$\text{confusing}(Y) \wedge \text{know}(X, \text{come_out_well}(X, Y))$.

In this formula, $\llbracket \circ \rrbracket$ denotes the meaning of \circ , the $::=$ symbol indicates that the right-hand part represent the semantics of the left-hand part, the **type** $::$ *variable* expressions denote that variable *variable* of type **type** is introduced and (implicitly) existentially quantified, and the conjuncts after “:” are predicates that specify the behaviors of the (typed) variables previously introduced.

Subsequently, we assume that we have a speaking agent (a “locuteur” in Ducrot’s sense (Ducrot, 1998)), who may not like individuals that she or he designates through “bigre”: if Y is the “locuteur” and X the “bigre”, then:

$\llbracket \text{bigre} \rrbracket \models \text{individual} :: X, Y : \text{bigre}(X) \wedge \neg(\text{equals}(X, Y)) \Rightarrow \neg(\text{like}(Y, X))$.

In this formula, \models means that the left-hand side entails the right-hand side in a model-theoretic sense, the predicate `equals/2` is true if both its arguments are bound to the same value (if at least one of them is a constant), or are identical variables, and \Rightarrow is the static (first-order) logical implication; the rest of the notations are as specified above. The last entailment authorizes agent Y to designate (through meaning extension) by “bigre” any entity or situation that she or he dislikes and, *then* (in a diachronic sense (Anscombe, 1985)) any situation that he or she is surprised and slightly annoyed with. This allows the agent to place the label “bigre” on an entity *by saying* (the performative aspect (Ducrot, 1981)) that s/he does so: “Je te considère bigre !” (“I find you ‘bigre!’”); then (this time, not necessarily in a diachronic sense), by ellipsis, this becomes, simply, “Bigre !”. Thus, the usage of “bigre !” as an interjection for expressing surprise, optionally combined with a slight indignation is obtained via delocutive derivation from the noun “bigre”.

In the remainder of the paper we first review the types of delocutivity studied by Anscombe and de Cornulier. Then, we argue that all Anscombe and de Cornulier’s types of delocutivity are essentially the manifestations of a single process, parameterized in the way the “semantic shift” from the original to the derived sense is performed (e.g. from “bigre” as a cunning villain, to “bigre” as a marker of – optionally unsettling – surprise). However, other aspects in the delocutive derivation processes, such as the performative usage, remain essentially unchanged. Finally, Anscombe’s data is revisited in light of our main thesis, of a single, but parameterized, delocutive process.

2 Different types of delocutive derivation

As discussed by Larcher (2003) and in the introduction of the present paper, the notion of “delocutive derivation” has first been proposed by Benveniste (1966), then thoroughly analyzed by Anscombe and Ducrot in various papers in the 70s and

early 80s, for rapidly falling into oblivion afterwards. However, the importance of the phenomenon has been recently re-emphasized while explaining the behavior of certain verbs or constructions in several languages (such as the Italian difference between “la mia macchina” – “my car”, where the definite article “la” occurs, and “mio figlio” – “my son”, where the definite article does not occur (Hölker, 1998)) (Larcher, 1985; Plank, 2005; Haïk, 2009). In this section we will review the most consistent currently-available attempts at theorizing the notion, as provided in particular by Anscombe (and Ducrot) and de Cornulier.

First, in Anscombe (1979), the author tries to mitigate some of the issues with Benveniste’s notion of delocutivity, which seems not to be enough connected to the notion of performativity; for instance, while Benveniste claims that “Merci !” means “*Saying* « merci ! »”, Anscombe maintains that by uttering “Merci !” one actually *performs* the act of thanking somebody. Starting from such observations, Anscombe develops a first version of what he calls *generalized delocutivity*. This generalized delocutivity is seen as a four-stage process:

1. One starts from a “morpheme” M that is considered as an “objective predicate” (“*prédicat objectif*” in Anscombe’s parlance) with a semantic value S ; this value is “objective” in that “it seems to talk about the world” (“il a l’air de parler du monde”, according to Anscombe);
2. M is used, with semantic value S , in certain types of utterances (thus, M is *formulaic* – “*formulaire*” in Anscombe’s parlance);
3. A novel “morpheme” M^* is produced, with a semantic value S^* , which “contains an allusion” (Anscombe, 1979) to the usage of M with value S ;
4. If $M^* \equiv M$ (formal identity of the “morphemes”), then the usages of M at stage 2 are *re-read* (“*relus*”) by giving the semantic value S^* to M .

Subsequently, Anscombe proceeds to apply this mechanism to certain constructions, such as “souhaiter” and “merci / remercier”. Although Anscombe discusses the performative status of the data, we will refrain from doing this, in order to focus on the delocutive derivation process alone. For “souhaiter” (“to wish for”) the analysis proposed by Anscombe goes as follows:

1. “souhaiter” is a “morpheme” that corresponds to a predicate considered as objective, having the meaning of “to wish (for)” as in “Peter wishes, without too much hope, that his favorite soccer team wins the game tonight”; this meaning is called “psychological” by Anscombe;

2. “souhaiter” is used, with its “psychological” meaning, in formulas such as “Je souhaite que tu...” (“I wish (desire that) you...”), supposed to make wishes for the accomplishment of a certain endeavor, by associating oneself, through the words, to the desires of the addressee of such an utterance;
3. The verb “souhaiter*” is created, with the meaning $\llbracket \text{souhaiter}^* \rrbracket ::= S^* =$ performing the (speech) act (Searle, 1969) that one performs by saying “I wish [...] (that)...”. At this stage, the indirect (dative) object complement role [...] of “wish” designates the addressee of the wishing speech act, not only the person to whom one speaks (see Ducrot (1998) for a thorougher discussion on the addressee / interlocutor distinction);
4. The formula “Je souhaite que...” is re-read by giving the semantic value S^* to “souhaiter”, i.e., by realizing “Je souhaite que...” as “Je souhaite* que...”.

An interesting remark at this stage concerns the passage from stage 3 to stage 4, since, according to Anscombe, this is where the performative character of “souhaiter*” stems from. Indeed, as an assertion, the formula “Je souhaite* que...” indicates that its utterer performs the wishing act, which is performed precisely via this formula. Thus, the performativity seems to appear as a consequence of the generalized delocutivity. However, unlike Anscombe, we are not going to further dwell on the performative status of (delocutively derived) constructions, because this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Concerning the derivation of “Merci !” as a politeness formula (of thanking), from the concept of “merci” as a favor, a similar mechanism is put forth by Anscombe: (i) first, “merci” stands for a favor (that one does to somebody); (ii) “merci” is used with this value, in the formula “merci !”: in return for a favor, one says to somebody “(c’est une) merci (que je te revaudrai) !” (“(it is a) favor (that I will give you in return”); (iii) a new noun “merci*” is created, with the semantic value $S^* =$ the act that one performs by saying “merci !”; (iv) the usages of “merci” from stage (ii) are re-read with the value S^* , i.e., “merci !” is re-read as “merci* !”: one says what one does (“merci !”) only in order to do it. Furthermore, Anscombe derives the performativity of “remercier” (“to thank”) from its delocutive status, in a similar way to what was shown before, with the mention that “remercier” is a deverbative of “mercier”, the verb that existed until the 16th century for “to thank”.

In the same paper, Anscombe extends its generalized delocutivity to “complex morphemes”, by replacing the (simple) “morpheme” M in the previously presented procedure, with a formula $F(m_1, m_2, \dots, m_n)$, where m_1 to m_n are (simple) morphemes of semantic values s_1 to s_n ; the same goes for the replacement of M^* with a

formula F^* , which, however, remains a function of the same m_1 to m_n . Nevertheless, the semantic value S^* of F^* is *different* from the semantic values s_1 to s_n of the “morphemes” m_1 to m_n . Thus, he derives the expression “Sauve qui peut !” (roughly, “Run for your life!”) as follows:

1. We start from the existence of the lexemes “sauver” (“to save”), “qui” (“who”), and “pouvoir” (“to be able to”, or “power”);
2. These lexemes are used with their ordinary meanings in the formula F = “sauve qui peut !”, which, in situations of extreme danger, indicates to the addressees that the danger is so great that the only reasonable thing to do is to run away, if possible; hence, this denotes a panic situation;
3. A new complex “morpheme” $F^* = [\text{sauve-qui-peut}]^*$ is created, with the meaning $S^* =$ the act of saying “Sauve qui peut !”, i.e., a “panic act” (“acte de panique” in Anscombe’s parlance);
4. The “Sauve qui peut” expression, used at stage 2, is re-read as $[\text{sauve-qui-peut}]^*$, i.e., with the semantic value S^* ; at this stage, the expression is not perceived as an advice to run away (to save oneself) from a dangerous situations if possible, but as a panic scream, close to “Run!”.

However, as Anscombe points out, there are certain expressions where the last stages in the procedure shown above have not been reached (yet), e.g., “laissez-passer” (“pass”, in the sense of “free passage permit”) stopped at stage 3: the re-reading of the usage at stage 2 by virtue of the new semantics at stage three did not occur yet. Nevertheless, there always is a “semantic shift”, which takes place at stage 3, with the creation of the new semantic value S^* , which “contains an allusion” (cf. Anscombe (1979)) to the original semantic value S of a morpheme in a certain usage context.

In Anscombe (1980), the author provides a revised version of generalized delocutivity, extended to lexical formulas. Thus, a supplementary stage is added to the four proposed in Anscombe (1979). However, this stage only represents a specification of what happens when the derived surface form is identical to the original one. The process goes as follows:

1. There exist the “morphemes” m_1 to m_n of semantic values s_1 to s_n ;
2. A “conversational formula” (“formule conversationnelle”) F_1 occurs, where m_1 to m_n have the semantic values s_1 to s_n , and by uttering F_1 one performs a certain speech act;

3. Creation of a “complex morpheme” F_2 , of semantic value S_2 , which contains an allusion to the usage of $F_1(s_1, \dots, s_n)$ in stage 2;
4. If $F_1 \equiv F_2$, then the usage of F_1 in stage 2 is re-read by giving it the semantic value S_2 ;
5. If $F_1 \equiv F_2$, then the usage of F_1 in stage 3 is re-read by giving it the semantic value S_2 .

We remark that the last two stages of this process only specify what happens if the derived surface form is identical to the original one, hence discussing only *particular* situations of delocutive derivation.

Then, this process is applied to some insults, such as “crétin des Alpes” (originally, “person touched by cretinism” and, delocutively, an insult to the person to whom this “qualification” is applied). Thus, (i) initially, $\llbracket \text{crétin des Alpes} \rrbracket ::= \text{person touched by cretinism}$; (ii) occurrence of the formula $F_1 = (\text{crétin des Alpes})_1$ in the exclamation “Crétin des Alpes !”, used as an insult, by virtue of a so-called “discourse law” (“loi de discours” (Anscombre, 1980), but see also Ducrot (1998)): “If an agent X , by talking to another agent Y , describes him through pejorative characteristics, then X insults Y ”; (iii) construction of a new “morpheme” $F_2 = (\text{crétin des Alpes})_2$, with the semantic value $\llbracket (\text{crétin des Alpes})_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{person to whom one performs the act that one performs by saying “(crétin des Alpes)}_1 \text{ !”}$; (iv) since $F_2 \equiv F_1$, the usage of this expression at stage (ii) is re-read by giving the semantic value S_2 (i.e., $\llbracket (\text{crétin des Alpes})_2 \rrbracket$) to F_1 (i.e., $(\text{crétin des Alpes})_1$), i.e., “(crétin des Alpes)₁ !” is re-read as “(crétin des Alpes)₂ !”: one utters what one does – an insult, only for doing it; (v) the usage of F_1 in stage (iii) is re-read, with semantic value S_2 , i.e., $\llbracket (\text{crétin des Alpes})_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{person to whom one performs the act that one performs by saying “(crétin des Alpes)}_2 \text{ !”}$.

We should note that the last stage of this process is merely a “performative endowment” of F_2 (in fact, identical to F_1) with the semantic value S_2 , i.e., this expression becomes performative not only with the semantic value S_1 , but also with S_2 , which, in turn, is a “performative endowment” of S_1 (i.e., roughly, S_2 means performing the act that one performs by communicating *an allusion to S_1*). Thus, at the last stage of the process one obtains that F_2 gets the meaning $\llbracket F_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{performing the act that one performs by performing the act that one performs by communicating an allusion to } S_1$, hence, a sequencing of *two* performative constructions! However, given that the derived expression is ultimately of semantic value S_2 , only the performative usage of F_2 (i.e., F_1) with semantic value S_2 is relevant; the usage of the expression with the semantic value S_1 is “lost on the way” in the delocutive derivation process.

Therefore, if one prefers to apply the “Occam’s razor”, we believe that the embedding of the two speech acts might be dropped, thus allowing F_1 to have a derived meaning like “performing the act that one performs by communicating an allusion to S_1 ”.

Concerning the analysis of insults as a result of a delocutive derivation process, it is worth mentioning the work of Chastaing and Abdi (1980), where an inquiry on the psychological motivations of the swearing is provided, and Anscombe’s account is discussed as a potential way of linguistically materializing this type of expressions. However, we will not dwell further on this issue here, because our goal is to analyze the general delocutive derivation processes, by using particular linguistic constructions (viz. insults, greetings, interjections, verbs) only as data.

The performativity of certain verbs being the consequence of a delocutive derivation process is discussed at length by Ducrot (1980), but Anscombe (1980) provides an illustrative example, that we discuss here, because it will be further revisited (in Section 3.2) in light of our thesis, on only one delocutive derivation process, parameterized by the type of “semantic shift”. Thus, Anscombe analyzes the construction “permettre [à quelqu’un] (de)...” (“to allow [somebody] (to)...”) as follows: (i) “permettre₁” originally means something like “to permit”, “to enable”, or even “let (free access)”; (ii) occurrence of the formula $F_1 = \text{“Je te permets”}$ (“I am letting you”): by using F_1 one performs a “permission” act, by telling the addressee (denoted by the pronominally-realized indirect object complement role “te” of the verb “permettre”) that s/he is free to do something; (iii) a new verb “permettre₂” is created, with a semantic value $S_2 = \text{performing the act that one performs by saying “Je te permets}_1$ ”; (iv) since the two surface forms are identical, the usage at stage (ii) is re-read with the semantic value S_2 : by saying “Je te permets”, one actually lets somebody do something, by merely stating that one does so; (v) the usage at stage (iii) is re-read with the semantic value S_2 , hence $\llbracket \text{permettre}_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{performing the act that one performs by saying “Je te permets}_2$ ”.

Furthermore, in Anscombe (1980), the author also proposes a so-called *generalized over-delocutivity* (“sur-délocutivité généralisée”), whereby a delocutively-derived expression can constitute the initial expression a new delocutive derivation process. This actually represents, as we argue in Section 3.1, a *sequencing* of several (generalized) delocutive derivation processes, not a different type of delocutive derivation.

Anscombe then proceeds to analyze “Merci !” as a *refusal* marker, roughly equivalent, in certain situations, to “(thanks, but) no, thanks”, or to “thanks anyway”, as in: “Non, je ne veux pas, merci !” (“No, I do not want to, thanks anyway!”). The sequencing of delocutive derivations that Anscombe proposes goes as follows: (i) initially, $\llbracket \text{merci}_1 \rrbracket = S_1 ::= \text{favor that one does to somebody}$; (ii) “merci₁” is used with the semantic meaning S_1 in the formula “Merci₁ !”, whereby one thanks somebody,

according to the discourse law (Anscombre, 1980; Ducrot, 1998): “If an agent X tells another agent Y that S_1 is a favor that Y does to X , then X thanks Y ”; (iii) a new noun “ merci_2 ” is created, with $\llbracket \text{merci}_2 \rrbracket ::= S_2 = \text{act that one performs by saying “Merci}_1 \text{!”}$; (iv) the usages of “ merci_1 ” at stage (ii) are re-read with the semantic value S_2 ; (v) = (i’) re-reading of “ merci_2 ” at stage 3 with the value S_2 : $\llbracket \text{Merci}_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{the act that one performs by saying “Merci}_2 \text{!”}$; (ii’) “ merci_2 ” is used in the formula “ $\text{Merci}_2 \text{!”}$, for refusing something: one thanks something, by emphasizing that this is not a favor, and that one would like to refuse it; (iii’) a new expression “ merci_3 ” occurs, with $\llbracket \text{merci}_3 \rrbracket ::= \text{the act that one performs by saying “Merci}_2 \text{!”}$; (iv’) the “ $\text{Merci}_2 \text{!”}$ in (ii’) is re-read as “ $\text{Merci}_3 \text{!”}$; (v’) “ Merci_3 ” is re-read as the act that one performs by saying “ $\text{Merci}_3 \text{!”}$ ”.

This analysis of “*merci*” as a refusal marker fails to account for the semantic shift from a thank to a refusal meaning; instead, it complicates the analysis by getting into recursive performativity issues (cf. above). As we argue in Section 3.2, the essential process at hand here is the semantic shift **thank** \rightarrow **refusal**, that “*merci*” undergoes. Save for this shift, the whole process is merely a sequencing of two “generalized delocutivity” derivations.

In Anscombre (1981), the author re-discusses, in a more systematic way, the various types of delocutive derivation introduced in previous papers. Thus, he first contrasts the *lexical delocutivity*, whereby one lexeme is delocutively derived from another lexeme (this is an extension of Benveniste’s notion of delocutivity (Benveniste, 1966) to other parts of speech than verbs), or from an expression – a “formula” (“formule”), to the *formulaic delocutivity* (“*délocutivité formulaire*”), whereby one expression (“formula”) is delocutively derived from a lexeme.

As an example of formulaic delocutivity, Anscombre analyzes “*Je te supplie !*” (“I beg you!”) in detail, along the same lines as the analysis provided in Anscombre (1980) for “*Je te permets*”, or even for “*Crétin des Alpes !*”, as constructions obtained via generalized delocutivity. The useful contribution of the paper in this respect lies in the observation that the “general principle” behind the formulaic delocutivity resides in that the usage of the expression F_1 , that had only *conversationally* the meaning S_2 in stage 3, ends by acquiring this meaning *conventionally* as well. The distinction between conversational and conventional meanings seems, in Anscombre’s acceptance, to boil down to the “performative endowment” of F_1 with the meaning S_2 , which is *shifted from* (i.e., “contains an allusion to”, in Anscombre’s parlance) S_1 , the original meaning of F_1 . The author also adds a discussion on the diacronicity of the (formulaic) delocutive derivation process, but this seems natural, in our view: in particular, the semantic shift occurring at stage 3 in the process is an evolutionary process, which, obviously, takes place in time. In this sense, any delocutive derivation

process has (at least) a diachronic step; hence, this detail seems to bare little relevance to the discussion of the differences between delocutive derivation processes.

Furthermore in the same paper (Anscombe, 1981), the author proceeds to define the generalized delocutivity as a “combination between lexical and formulaic delocutivities”, whereby a lexeme is derived from another lexeme (as in the lexical delocutivity), but *via* an expression (a “formula”), or, as Anscombe puts it “cristallisation d’une valeur énonciative”. In its details, the process is similar to the description provided in Anscombe (1980). However, the paper also provides several instances of “incomplete delocutive derivation”, where the five-stage process is still ongoing, or at least stopped at an intermediary stage. Thus, the lexeme “remercier” with the meaning of “dismissing” is obtained via a generalized delocutive derivation process that stopped at an intermediary stage (namely, the third). We will briefly discuss Anscombe’s analysis here: (i) first, “remercier” has the semantic value $\llbracket \text{remercier} \rrbracket ::= S_1 =$ perform an act of thanking, for which the verb is performative; (ii) occurrence of the expression “Je vous remercie” for dismissing somebody; the “discourse law” proposed by Anscombe for explaining the semantic shift from **thanking** to **dismissing** is that when one “remercie” (“thanks”) somebody, it is the case that s/he has finished what s/he had to do; thus, a way of pointing out that the cooperation with a person is over (and hence, that s/he is dismissed), is thanking that person for what s/he has done; (iii) “remercier” tends to acquire the semantic value $S_2 =$ performing the act that one performs by saying “Je vous remercie”, used as at stage (ii); however, stages (iv) and (v) are not reached. Indeed, for stage (iv), “Pierre m’a dit « Je vous remercie »” (“Pierre told me ‘I *remercie* you’ ”) can be paraphrased as “Pierre m’a remercié” (“Pierre *remercier*-ed me” – a past simple of “remercier”) only if $\llbracket \text{remercier} \rrbracket ::=$ expressing ones gratitude. Stage (v) is not reached either, since one can very well say “Puisque vous persistez à ne pas suivre mes consignes, je vous renvoie” (“Since you keep not following my instructions, I am sending you away / you are dismissed”), but by no means “Puisque vous persistez à ne pas suivre mes consignes, je vous remercie”, in a performative reading (i.e., one cannot actually dismiss somebody by the last “je vous remercie”).

After this discussion on the generalized delocutivity, Anscombe reconsiders the over-delocutivity (“sur-délocutivité) along the same lines as in Anscombe (1980), by stressing however on the fact that the surface form of the expression being derived remains necessarily unchanged. He illustrates the mechanism for the construction “être désolé” (in certain cases, “to be sorry”). This expression has a basic meaning of “éprouver de la peine” (“experiencing pain”) that, via generalized delocutivity, shifts towards the meaning “faire un act d’excuse” (“performing an excuse act”). Starting from this step, a new (generalized) delocutive derivation process produces a new

meaning, “faire un acte de refus” (“performing a refusal act”), hence a shift **excuse** → **refusal**. Thus, “Je suis désolé” acquires the meaning of performing the act that one performs by saying “Je suis désolé”, with $[[\text{désolé}]] ::= \text{refusal}$.

Finally, in Anscombe (1985), the author discusses the lexical delocutivity in thorough detail, by arguing that the distinction between synchronic and diachronic delocutivity derivation is relevant. Thus, the synchronic lexical delocutivity is defined as a, we might say, particular case of formulaic delocutivity, where a new lexeme is derived from a lexeme, via the following steps:

1. At an given moment T there exists a lexeme-meaning pair (M_1, S_1) ; S_1 is understood here *not* as a literal meaning, but as a “semantic function” (“fonction sémantique”) in Anscombe’s parlance, which, given that, according to the author, can include “instructions”, pertains more to pragmatic elements, being more akin to a Searlian (or Vandervekian) speech act type (Searle, 1969; Vanderveken, 1990);
2. At the same time T , a new pair (M_2, S_2) is derived, such that:
 - M_2 is “morphologically derived” (in Anscombe’s parlance) from M_1 ;
 - The speakers, users of the surface form M_2 “understand S_2 with respect to S_1 , and not vice-versa” (Anscombe, 1985), i.e., the meaning S_2 is derived (Anscombe does not, at the moment, specify how) from S_1 , *and* certain “linguistic properties” of M_2 are derived from S_1 , the meaning of the original surface form, M_1 ;
 - S_2 designates properties, relations or actions that are somehow related to the illocutionary act (presumably, in Austin (1962)’s acception) performed *via* certain utterances of M_1 .

We believe that, ultimately, the last (third) criterion from step 2 above boils down to the new pair M_2, S_2 making an allusion to the performative value of S_1 , thus apparently being the reverse of the “performative endowment” that we have already encountered in all previous types of delocutive derivation. However, this happens only in appearance, since (M_2, S_2) is performative as well. It seems only to be that the “performative endowment” occurred earlier in the delocutive derivation process: by the time (M_2, S_2) is created, (M_1, S_1) was already having a performative value. An example from Anscombe’s 1985 paper seems to support this observation: indeed the expression (already introduced in this section of the paper) “un sauve-qui-peut” designates a panic action of running off a certain place or situation, *as a consequence* of the accomplishment of the illocutionary act performed, for instance,

by certain utterances of “Sauve qui peut !”. Moreover, by uttering “Il y a eu un sauve-qui peut là-bas” (“There was a « sauve-qui-peut » out there”), one performs an *expressive* illocutionary act (in Searle (1969)’s acception), of concern and/or disdain with respect to the event being reported (a group of people chaotically running off a certain dangerous situation).

Then, Anscombe defines the diachronic lexical delocutive derivation as a process that is *posterior* to synchronic lexical delocutive derivation; however, the definition seems less clear in its details, since the only difference between the two types of lexical delocutive derivation seems to stem from the temporal distance between moment of the occurrence of the synchronically-derived linguistic form, and the current time when this form is observed in language use. Indeed, according to Anscombe (1985), a form-meaning pair (M_2, S_2) is a diachronic lexical delocutive of another form-meaning pair (M_1, S_1) if and only if:

- At a moment T_0 , (M_2, S_2) is a synchronic lexical delocutive of (M_1, S_1) ;
- At a moment $T > T_0$, *both* (M_2, S_2) and (M_1, S_1) are observed in language use.

Although not explicitly stated, the condition that (M_1, S_1) and (M_2, S_2) coexist at a moment that is posterior to the occurrence of the latter linguistic form seems essential in that, if it is quite obvious that any diachronic lexical delocutive expression had been synchronic at a time in the past, the converse is deemed to be false by Anscombe, specifically on the grounds of the non-coexistence of the original and derived linguistic forms at a moment that posterior to the occurrence of the derived form. In other words, Anscombe points out that there are synchronic lexical delocutives that did not become diachronic delocutives as well, via the example “à bon entendeur, salut !” (roughly, “a word to the wise is enough”). To this end, Anscombe puts forth the phenomenon of “re-reading” (“relecture”), whereby an original form-meaning pair (M_1, S_1) is re-read with a new meaning S'_1 , thus leading one to use the linguistic form M_1 with the meaning S'_1 . The re-reading consists in the readers seeing (M_2, S_2) as derived from (M_1, S'_1) , instead of (M_1, S_1) . Hence, for “à bon entendeur, salut !”, “salut” originally used to mean (according to Anscombe (1985), but see also Ducrot (1980) for a slightly different account) “Celui qui (me) comprend bien, assure son salut” (roughly, “Those who understand (me) well, guarantee their redemption”). This meaning of “salut” disappeared from contemporary French, thus the speakers have re-read the expression as a politeness formula, only via a synchronic (and no diachronic) delocutive derivation. The expression “à bon entendeur, salut” thus appears to be only a reminiscence of the original, now disappeared, meaning of “salut”.

The notions of synchronic and diachronic delocutive derivation are applied by Anscombe for analyzing various usages of the French verb “dire” (usually translatable as “to say”). Thus, for a form M_1 with a meaning S_1 , (i) $\llbracket \text{dire}_1(M_1) \rrbracket ::=$ performing the illocutionary act that, at a certain moment T in the past, one could perform by certain utterances of M_1 ; (ii) $\llbracket \text{dire}_2(M_1) \rrbracket ::=$ performing the illocutionary act that one currently can perform by uttering M_1 . A lexical delocutive (M_2, S_2) of (M_1, S_1) is diachronic if S_2 is understood starting from $\llbracket \text{dire}_1(M_1) \rrbracket$, or, in other words, if the meaning of “ $\text{dire}_1(M_1)$ ” entails S_2 : $\llbracket \text{dire}_1(M_1) \rrbracket \models S_2$. (M_2, S_2) is a diachronic lexical delocutive of (M_1, S_1) if $\llbracket \text{dire}_2(M_1) \rrbracket \models S_2$.

In de Cornulier (1976), the author discusses the process of “auto-delocutivity”, which is like Anscombe’s generalized delocutivity, except for the fact that the linguistic form remains unchanged throughout the derivation process. An example thoroughly analyzed by de Cornulier (and discussed by Anscombe (1979) and Ducrot (1980) as well) is the Latin noun “salus” (meaning either “health”, or “redemption”, according to the context). First, “salus” used to mean only “health” and to be utilized as such, as a greeting formula: being polite, one wishes good health to people one encounters. Then (diachronically) a new noun “salus*” is created, with the semantic value $\llbracket \text{salus}^* \rrbracket ::=$ speech act that one performs by uttering “Salus”. Finally, “salus” is re-read as “salus*” in the polite wish of good health: by saying “Salus!” one actually mean “Salus*!”, i.e. one utters what one does, with the sole purpose of doing it. However, throughout all these transformations, the surface form of the expression remained the same – “Salus”.

3 A uniform account on delocutivity

3.1 General model

The main thesis of this paper is that all Anscombe (and Ducrot), and de Cornulier’s types of delocutive derivation are essentially the same, save for the “semantic shift”, which implies that the new semantic value of the morpheme under discussion contains an *allusion* to the original semantic value of this morpheme, for instance, from $\llbracket \text{merci} \rrbracket ::= \text{grace} \vee \text{mercy}$, to $\llbracket \text{merci} \rrbracket ::= \text{thanks}$. However, both the semantic shift and the “performative endowment” (i.e., by *saying* “Merci !” one actually thank (“remercier”) somebody; “merci ! (thanks)” is a delocutive of “merci” – “grace”, and “remercier” is a delocutive of “merci !” – “thanks!”) are essential to the delocutive derivation.

Thus, instead of different types of delocutive derivation, one only has different types of semantic shifts (as we will illustrate in Section 3.2): (i) **state** \rightarrow **action**, (ii)

action \rightarrow state, and / or sequences of several *instances* of delocutive derivation.

In order to formalize the delocutive derivation process, we assume that each expression is characterized by a pair (M, S) , where M is a morpheme, and S is its basic (dictionary-level) meaning, and that this expression can be subject to two shifts: (i) surface shift, denoted by \mapsto_M , and (ii) semantic shift, denoted by \mapsto_S . Furthermore, we assume that the delocutive derivation process is a mapping $\Delta : \{M\} \times \{S\} \rightarrow \{M\} \times \{S\}$ from the Cartesian product between a set of morphemes and set of meanings, and that this process is *parameterized* by the type of semantic shift (cf. above). Thus, for two morpheme-meaning pairs (M_1, S_1) and (M_2, S_2) , the latter is delocutively derived from the former if there exists a semantic shift \mapsto_S such that $(M_2, S_2) = \Delta((M_1, S_1); \mapsto_S)$.

However, the Δ mapping is also implicitly parameterized by the *syntactic* contexts where M_1 and M_2 occur, i.e., in “Je vous dis « merci » !”, the text “Je vous dis” represents the context of “merci”. This issue is relevant for the “performative endowment” stage, where the syntactic context can be discarded, i.e., “Merci !” has the same effect as “Je vous dis « merci » !”. In this setting, the Δ mapping can be given a procedural interpretation, as shown below:

1. We start from a morpheme M_1 that has the basic meaning S_1 in context C_1 :
 $\llbracket M_1 \rrbracket^{C_1} ::= S_1$;
2. Surface and semantic shifts are performed: $M_1 \mapsto_M M_2 \wedge S_1 \mapsto_S S_2$, such that $\llbracket M_2 \rrbracket^{C_2} ::= S_2$ with $((M_1 \neq M_2) \wedge (S_1 \equiv S_2)) \vee ((M_1 \equiv M_2) \wedge (S_1 \neq S_2)) \vee ((M_1 \neq M_2) \wedge (S_1 \neq S_2))$, i.e., there is a surface shift, but no semantic shift (as in “merci” \rightarrow “remercier”), or there is a semantic shift, but no surface shift (as in “merci (grace)” \rightarrow “merci (thanks)”), or there are both a surface and a semantic shift (as in “ergo (thing)” \rightarrow “ergoter (to quibble)"); this semantic shift is accompanied by a “performative endowment”, whereby M_2 serves to perform a speech act;
3. The context C_2 is dropped (e.g. in “Merci !” which is equivalent to “Je vous dis « merci » !” *and* to actually thanking, or as in “Pardon” – “Sorry”, which is equivalent to “Je vous demande pardon” – roughly, “I am sorry”); thus, a “new” surface form, M_2^* is obtained, such that $\llbracket M_2^* \rrbracket \equiv \llbracket M_2 \rrbracket^{C_2} ::= S_2$, i.e., M_2^* “interiorizes” the derived meaning S_2 .

A “surface-level” view of the procedure can be depicted as in Figure 1.

Thus, we see that either one of the two shifts, \mapsto_M and \mapsto_S , but not both, can

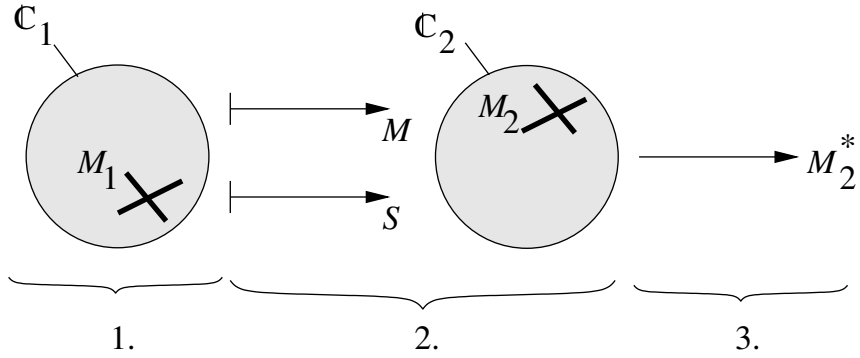


Figure 1: “Surface-level” view of the delocutive derivation process

be the identity¹. However, we believe that, from a semantics-pragmatics interface point of view, the surface shift is of minor importance compared to the semantic shift, hence, only the latter is explicitly represented as a parameter of the delocutive derivation process Δ .

The major importance of the semantic shifting process, compared to surface shifting, becomes relevant in the *sequencing* of delocutive derivation processes (i.e., what Anscombe calls over-delocutivity – cf. also Section 2.1). A sequencing of two instances of delocutive derivation can be formalized as:

$$(M_3, S_3) = \Delta((M_2, S_2); \mapsto_S^{(2)}) = \Delta(\Delta((M_1, S_1); \mapsto_S^{(1)}); \mapsto_S^{(2)}).$$

This sequencing of delocutive processes is straightforwardly generalizable to more than two instances. However, currently available data do not support the existence of sequences of more than two delocutive derivations. Regarding the surface shift \mapsto_M , its status is not the concern of this paper; however, its existence is captured in an implicit manner through the mere existence of a derived surface form M_2 from a starting surface form M_1 .

The contexts C_1 and C_2 are formalized at a syntactic level, through a notion of theta-roles loosely borrowed from Carnie (2006), in that we retain only the information about the syntactic roles associated to the theta-roles: for instance, if a verb v assigns a direct object complement (DC) theta-role, this is marked thus: $C \ni \{\theta_{DC}\}$. Furthermore, the entire context of such a verb is represented by a kind of theta grid, where only the syntactic role information is represented: if a verb v assigns the roles that are syntactically, σ_1 to σ_n (e.g., direct object complement, indirect object complement, circumstantial complement, subject, etc.), then its context

¹If both surface and semantic shifts are the identity, then the delocutive derivation process is trivial, and boils down to no derivation at all.

is: $\mathbb{C}(v) = \{\theta_{\sigma_1}, \dots, \theta_{\sigma_n}\}$.

A related effort in systematically accounting for Anscombe and Ducrot’s delocutive derivation processes is described in Récanati (1987): pp. 87-105. There, the author critically discusses most of Anscombe and Ducrot’s examples of delocutive derivation of the performative verbs, putting forth especially the fact that the performative usage of several verbs is a consequence of a delocutive derivation starting from a descriptive meaning. Thus, Récanati reduces all of Anscombe and Ducrot’s types of delocutive derivation² to a four-stage process that, however *embeds* de Cornulier’s auto-delocutive derivation as one of the stages. Indeed, according to Récanati (1987): p. 103, the delocutive derivation (for verbs only) goes as follows:

1. A surface form (a verb, in Récanati’s account) M has a “non-illocutionary” (“objective”, or “psychological”, in Anscombe’s parlance (Anscombe, 1979, 1980)) meaning S_1 , that licenses its usage in the first person present, for performing an illocutionary act A ;
2. The use of the expression “I M ” (if M is a verb) for performing act A becomes conventional (i.e., currently used in language);
3. By auto-delocutive derivation from its conventional use for performing act A , M acquires an illocutionary meaning S_2 , whereby it denotes act A ;
4. As a result of this derivation, the expression (which is conventional) “I M ” is re-read as containing M with $\llbracket M \rrbracket ::= S_2$. The formula “I M ” thus becomes a performative that serves to perform act A while *denoting* its performance.

There are several differences between Récanati’s account and our model. First, in our account, the original expression is not assumed to license its performative use, being only an “objective predicate”, such as the Latin “salus” (“health”, or “redemption”, as *nouns*).

Secondly, the passage from the descriptively prescribed performative usage to a conventional performative usage (present in Récanati’s second stage) is absent from our account, since we consider that this distinction is not relevant from a strictly praxeologic perspective: in both cases, expression “ M ” (or “I M ” for Récanati) can be used for performing an illocutionary act in Récanati’s account; in our account however, as we have pointed out, the expression becomes performative only in its

²We should notice however that Récanati considers mostly Ducrot’s work on delocutives, as reported in Ducrot (1980, 1981, 1998), while we consider mostly Anscombe’s work, as reported in Anscombe (1979, 1980, 1981, 1985).

last stage, after the “semantic shift” stage. This “semantic shift” is critical to both our proposal and Récanati’s account. However, whereas in our model this shifting remains semantic, in that, on the one hand, the meaning of the expression is changing, and, on the other hand, somehow independently, the form can change as well, in Récanati’s setting the shifting first has a pragmatic component (stage 2 – a descriptive \rightarrow conventional transition, considered irrelevant in our account), followed by a complex process, an auto-delocutive derivation, embedded in step 3, whereby the conventional use of M acquires an illocutionary meaning, whence not only performing, but also *denoting* the performance of speech act A . However, we only ascribe all this evolution to a “mere” semantic shift, in that the original meaning of M (S_1) *shifts* to a new meaning S_2 , sometimes irrespective of the performative status of M (as in “merci” – “grace / mercy” \rightarrow “merci” – “thanks”). In our view, the “performative endowment” of M occurs in the end of the second stage of the delocutive derivation process, which is followed by what we called “context drop”, i.e., the ability of performing the act that can be performed by performing the action that corresponds to the derived meaning (S_2) of M by solely uttering M , without the associated (syntactical) context that first seem to license the novel usage of M .

From this contrastive comparison between Récanati’s account (which follows closely Ducrot, Anscombe and de Cornulier’s work) and ours, it is rather obvious that we adopt a rather “vericonditional” stance, in contrast to the “radical pragmatism” associated to the four authors mentioned. This is mainly motivated by our aim at a straightforward formalization of the process. Hence, this vericonditional stance is by no means a criticism to Anscombe and Ducrot’s principles. We do not claim either that this interpretation is superior to Récanati’s account as far as the description of linguistic phenomena is concerned; we only aim for a formally clearer account.

In the remainder of the paper, we will test our thesis, on the existence of a single delocutive derivation mechanism, parameterized by the type of semantic shift, by confronting it with Anscombe’s data. This confrontation will be carried out by taking all of the Anscombe’s data (still represented as form-meaning pairs) and applying the same delocutive derivation mechanism Δ (as shown above), parameterized by several appropriate semantic shifts \mapsto_S . If our thesis is correct, then we should obtain the same results as those yielded by the application of Anscombe’s types of delocutive derivation.

3.2 Revisiting Anscombe’s data

In this section we show that each of the examples put forth by Anscombe, Ducrot and de Cornulier (whose accounts have been described in Section 2) can be delocutively derived *via* the general procedure introduced in Section 3.1, through appropriate parameterizations of the semantic shifts, and of the nature of the surface forms being handled (i.e., lexemes, and / or expressions).

Thus, first, “souhaiter”, analyzed by Anscombe as undergoing a generalized delocutivity derivation, can be accounted for in our framework, thus obtaining the same results as those of Anscombe. The process goes as follows:

1. First, the lexeme “souhaiter” is characterized by the meaning of “to desire” in contexts that require the presence of a direct completive theta-role (θ_{DC}), with no indirect completive role (one wishes that something happens, there is no patient, semantically): $\llbracket \text{souhaiter}_1 \rrbracket^{\{\theta_{DC}\}} ::= \text{to desire}$;
2. An identity surface shift is performed: “souhaiter” \mapsto_M “souhaiter”; a semantic shift is performed: $\llbracket \text{souhaiter}_1 \rrbracket^{\{\theta_{DC}\}} \mapsto_S \llbracket \text{souhaiter}_2 \rrbracket^{\{\theta_{IC}; \theta_{DC}\}}$, i.e., to a new meaning, that assigns, as a syntactic context, two theta-roles, an indirect object complement, followed by a direct object complement: one wishes *somebody* (filler of the indirect completive role θ_{IC}) something (filler of the direct completive role θ_{DC}), e.g., “Je vous (θ_{IC}) souhaite bonne chance (θ_{DC})”. The new meaning is $\llbracket \text{souhaiter}_2 \rrbracket^{\{\theta_{IC}; \theta_{DC}\}} ::= \text{to perform the act of making a wish to somebody, by saying it}$; as for the nature of the semantic shift \mapsto_S , it is a **state** \rightarrow **action** change (from the psychological state of desiring something, to the act of making a wish to somebody for something);
3. As a consequence of the “performative endowment”, the verb “souhaiter” retains the meaning $\llbracket \text{souhaiter}_2 \rrbracket$ without the context $C_2 = \{\theta_{IC}; \theta_{DC}\}$, i.e., C_2 is dropped, and thus this new meaning becomes *intrinsic* to the verb, which, we might say, “interiorizes” the derived meaning.

The derivation of “merci” from $\llbracket \text{merci}_1 \rrbracket ::= \text{a favor done to somebody}$, to $\llbracket \text{merci}_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{the act of thanking somebody for something}$, ascribed to generalized delocutivity by Anscombe, is performed in a similar way by our procedure. What differs now is the nature of the semantic shift, which is an **action** \rightarrow **action** transition, from the action of doing a favor, from the action of thanking; obviously, the actions are not the same, but are related, in that thanking is often a consequence of a favor; thus, \mapsto_S can be spelled out as $\text{action}_1 \rightarrow \text{action}_2 | \text{time} :: T_1, T_2 : \text{smaller}(T_1, T_2) \wedge \text{action}_1 @ T_1 \models \text{action}_2 @ T_2$. In this notation, the vertical bar | indicates that the predicates defined

to its left are such that the conditions to its right are satisfied; the *smaller/2* predicate takes as arguments two numbers and is true if and only if the former is strictly inferior to the latter; the “at” operator @, borrowed from hybrid semantics (Blackburn, 2000) indicates that that the predicate preceding it is true “at” the context that succeeds it (in this particular case, a moment in time). Another, minor difference (i.e., not relevant with respect to the interface of the Δ derivation with its exterior), lies in that the syntactic contexts C_1 for “merci₁” and C_2 for “merci₂” are given by: $C_1 = \emptyset$ – “merci₁”, as a noun, has no theta-roles, and $C_2 = \{\theta_{IC}; \theta_{IC}\}$ – “merci₂” (as verb, extant in French in the past, until the 16th century (Ducrot, 1980), whose “remercier” is a deverbative) assigns two indirect object complements: One thanks (“(re)mercier”) somebody for something – “Je te remercie” and, by context dropping (and also by ellipsis, in this case), “Merci !” addressed to an interlocutor.

Then, the derivation of “Sauve qui peut !” as an act of advice of running off a dangerous situation, from the three separate lexemes “sauver”, “qui” and “pouvoir” is akin to the case of “merci” seen above. However, a major difference is that now the process at hand is the “formulaic derivation” in Anscombe (1981)’s parlance, whereby a complex surface form is obtained from lexemes. The particularities of the process can be cast in our general framework too, as in the case of “souhaiter”, save for the semantic shift, which is of *action* \rightarrow *action* type: from the action of saving (denoted by “sauver”), to the action of giving advice to save oneself, by running off; the advice is “produced” by *stating* the expression – this is a consequence of the “performative endowment”. However, the changes between the contexts C_1 for \llbracket sauver $\rrbracket ::=$ to save, and C_2 for \llbracket sauve qui peut $\rrbracket ::=$ “panic” act, of giving advice to save oneself is interesting: whereas the original save assigns two theta-roles, a direct and an indirect object complement (to save somebody from something) – $C_1 = \{\theta_{DC}; \theta_{IC}\}$, the final expression becomes canned (“figée”, via a process of “figement” in Anscombe (1979)’s parlance), thus requiring no particular context from the outset – $C_2 = \emptyset$; thus, the context dropping stage is trivial in this case.

The generalized delocutives “Crétin des Alpes !” as an insult, and “Je te permets” for allowing somebody to do something by stating that one does so, are obtained similarly, with a few particularities though. The first particularity is that, in the case of “crétin des Alpes”, the semantic shift is of type *state* \rightarrow *action* (from the state of being a person touched by cretinism, to the action of insulting a person by stating that s/he is touched by cretinism), while in the case of “permettre” the semantic shift is of type *action* \rightarrow *action*, from the action of letting free access (allowing the access), to the action of allowing somebody to do something; hence, the shift could be characterized as: $\text{action}_1 \rightarrow \text{action}_2 | \text{action}_2 \sqsupset \text{action}_1$, where \sqsupset is true when the left-hand argument represents an extension of meaning with respect to the right

argument, that is for any model \mathbb{M} , $X, Y : X \sqsupset Y \Leftrightarrow (\mathbb{M} \models X \Rightarrow \mathbb{M} \models Y)$. Secondly, as far as the contexts are concerned, for the noun “crétin des Alpes”, it is required to fulfill the theta-role of direct object complement (e.g., “J’ai vu un crétin des Alpes aujourd’hui à l’hôpital” – “I saw a « crétin des Alpes » today at the hospital”), whereas the derived expression (the insult) is required (before context dropping) to take part in copulative constructions (“Tu es un crétin des Alpes !” – “You are a « crétin des Alpes »!”). For “permettre”, the original verb only assigns a direct completive theta-role, while an indirect completive role is not mandatory (e.g. “Je te permets l’accès dans ce bureau” – “I am allowing you free access in this office”, versus “A partir d’aujourd’hui on permet l’accès dans ce bureau” – “From today on, we allow for access in this office”). However, the derived “permettre” in “Je te permets” assigns the direct completive theta-role (“te” – “you” is θ_{DC}).

The lexical delocutive “sauve-qui-peut” as a description of a panic act, which is embedded in an expressive act is performed as well, for conveying the attitude of the utterer with regards to the panic act, is derived from the panic act “Sauve qui peut !” analyzed above, via a process that is very similar to previous examples, save, as usual, for the type of the semantic shift (in our case, a **action** \rightarrow **state**, from the action of giving an advice to save oneself, to the state of such a “saving oneself” action taking place), and for the relationship between the contexts for the original expression and for the derived one. Thus, the semantic shift is made from the action of giving an advice to run off, to the state of a certain environment (i.e. space / place *and* actors in it) enduring the *consequence* of such an advice, whence the similarity to the “merci” (that goes from **favor** to **thanking**) case regarding the semantic shift. As for the contexts, as we have seen above, initially $C_1 = \emptyset$ for “Sauve qui peut !”, as a consequence of the preceding delocutive derivation process, as shown above. However, the derived “sauve-qui-peut” is a noun that fulfills the theta-role of a direct object complement – “Il y avait un sauve-qui-peut dans cette halle” (“There was a « sauve-qui-peut » in that hall”). Hence, its context is such that it fulfills the direct object complement role: $C_2 \ni \{\text{verb} :: v | C(v) \ni \{\theta_{DC}\}\}$, i.e., the context of the expression is such that it includes a verb such that this verb assigns a direct object complement theta-role.

At the same time, the “sauve-qui-peut”, lexical delocutive in Anscombe’s parlance, can also be seen as the result of an over-delocutive derivation process from the original lexemes “sauver”, “qui” and “pouvoir”, whereby the compound noun is yielded by a sequence of two Δ delocutive processes (see Section 3.1):

(“sauve-qui-peut”, $\llbracket \text{sauve-qui-peut} \rrbracket$) = $\Delta(\Delta(\text{“sauver”} \uparrow \text{“qui”} \uparrow \text{“pouvoir”}, \llbracket \text{sauver} \rrbracket \wedge \llbracket \text{qui} \rrbracket \wedge \llbracket \text{pouvoir} \rrbracket); \text{action} \rightarrow \text{action}); \text{action} \rightarrow \text{state}$).

Quite a similar case is represented by the derivation of “remercier”, meaning “to

dismiss”, which is analyzed as over-delocutive by Anscombe himself. Thus, first $\llbracket \text{merci} \rrbracket ::= \text{thanking}$ is derived as shown above in this section; then (diachronically) the deverbative “remercier” is created, from the now extinct verb “mercier”. Hence, we have $\llbracket \text{remercier} \rrbracket ::= \text{to thank}$. Subsequently, “remercier” as dismissal is derived in a manner similar to the examples above, with some particularities concerning the semantic shifts and the contexts. As far as the semantic shift is concerned, we agree with Anscombe’s discourse law whereby one usually thanks somebody when that person has finished what s/he had to do, thus pointing out that ones “punctual” cooperation with that person is over. Hence, the semantic shift is of $\text{action} \rightarrow \text{action}$ type, the second action being somewhat *implicated* by the first one. This can be approximated as a (weak) consequence, which will be denoted by \vdash ; thus, the complete characterization of this semantic shift is: $\text{action}_1 \rightarrow \text{action}_2 : \text{action}_1 \vdash \text{action}_2$. Thus, the sequence of delocutive derivations can be represented as: $(\text{“remercier”}, \llbracket \text{remercier}_2 \rrbracket) = \Delta(\Delta(\text{“merci”}, \llbracket \text{merci}_1 \rrbracket); \text{action} \rightarrow \text{action}); \text{action} \rightarrow \text{action}$), where $\llbracket \text{merci}_1 \rrbracket ::= \text{thank}$, and $\llbracket \text{remercier}_2 \rrbracket ::= \text{dismissal}$. The creation of the deverbative “remercier” from the extinct “mercier” has not been explicitly represented, because it does not pertain to the delocutive derivation phenomenon.

Throughout this section we have seen how most of Anscombe’s examples, originally accounted for via several types of delocutive derivations, are obtained as the result of the same process, parameterized by the type and / or nature of the semantic shift, and constrained by the (syntactic) contexts where these expressions are used. Thus, it results that all of Anscombe’s different types of delocutive derivations are in fact particular instances of the same process, obtained *via* specific choices for the number of lexemes involved (as in the formulaic versus lexical, versus generalized delocutivity), or for the number of delocutive processes applied in a sequence (for all the examples at hand, this number seems to be one or two). What is relevant though, for distinguishing among these various instances of delocutive derivation, is the type and nature of the semantic shift between the meaning of the original expression, and the meaning of the delocutive one. This semantic shift is generally from an action to another action (especially for verbs), but also from a state to an action, or from an action to a state (especially for nouns derived from verbal constructions, or the other way round). The syntactic contexts only act as internal constraints to the delocutive derivation process, and are implicitly captured in the linguistic forms that are handled; this is why they were not represented as parameters of the delocutive derivation process. The auto-delocutive derivation process behaves exactly as the generalized delocutive derivation, except for the fact that the surface form of the expression remains unchanged.

Several of the data analyzed in the general framework that we introduced are

also relevant for other languages, for example, English, where delocutives such as “to wish (for)”, or “to allow (to)” exhibit similar behaviors to their French counterparts, “souhaiter”, and “permettre”, respectively. Hence, it would be an interesting challenge to apply the framework to other languages as well, in order to see to what extent our generalizations are cross-linguistically robust. Thus, current cross-linguistic research on delocutive constructions (see e.g. Plank (2005)) could be improved in at least two directions: first, the study could be extended beyond the verbs, and secondly, the descriptive account currently available could be given a formal “backbone” that would allow for a thorough study of the universals across languages.

4 Conclusions

In this article we have revisited the major available accounts on the delocutive derivation phenomenon, as studied by several French linguists, viz. Benveniste, de Cornulier, Ducrot, Anscombe, and Récanati. After a systematic discussion of their arguments, we have advanced the thesis that the plethora of delocutive derivation processes that these authors argue for are in fact parameterized instances of the same process. This unique process has been discussed in contrast with a similar attempt by Récanati, showing that our account is, we believe, clearer than previous ones. Furthermore, we have re-discussed most of Anscombe (*et alia*)’s data in light of this new unified account, showing that the same results as in previous accounts can be obtained by instantiating this unique process appropriately.

However, we believe that a real test-bed for our proposal (and for previous accounts as well) would be a cross-linguistic study of the delocutive derivation process, at first between Indo-European languages. Such an undertaking could be pursued along the lines of Plank (2005), but extended to other parts of speech than the verb, and formalized.

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