

SOURCE, INFERENCE AND THE POSITION OF THE SPEAKER IN STATEMENTS CONTAINING *SELON* IN FRENCH¹

by

Christiane Marque-Pucheu

Statements featuring reported speech share some common, semantic and enunciative characteristics. They contain four elements: (1) source, which permits retrieval and storage of information; (2) inference (which may or may not be present), allowing the introduction of new information; (3) the position of the speaker (which may be neutral); and (4) an assertion (the noun clause in the case of sentences containing verbs of communication). (2) and (3) are examples of mediatization, which integrates the effect of a third party's intervention in the transfer of information.

Using these four elements, French statements containing *selon* (*according to*) may correspond to two types: firstly, the cases where source, inference and position of the speaker are distinct, secondly, those where source, inference and position of the speaker merge. The concepts used allow to define a general common schema for statements with *selon*. The extent of the adverbial that is appropriated to the enunciation dictates the use of these concepts: we do not simply present description of formal regularities, but we will describe, as well, the linguistic operations revealed by the speaker who plays a central role in the operations of modalization and of inference. However, the semantic nature of the sub-sequence which follows *selon* (human, non-human metonymic of the human, the semantic nature of the speech verb nominalized), and forms of the type *selon tout(e) N* (*according to all N*) play a crucial role in the variations of the definition in our schema: according to the nature of the sub-sequence, source and position of the speaker will merge or not.

We demonstrate that *selon* exhibits mainly one point of view among others and that a priori there is a presupposition of veracity. The speaker, however, remains independent of this point of view and has total freedom to adhere to it or not. The non-adherence is often deduced from the context of the sentence to the right of *selon*. This applies to inference too, which, having been outlined in the sentence containing *selon*, is often developed later. As a result, the examination of the context to the right of *selon* allows us on many occasions to eliminate the ambiguities and to specify whether or not the inference is null.

Key-words: preposition, reported speech, performative verbs, inference, source of information.

Introduction

While giving information, the speaker may act as a witness (*J'ai assisté à un accident / I was at the site of the accident*), or may protect himself behind a third party from whom he got the information (*Il paraît qu'il y a eu un accident / It seems there was an accident*). Theoretically, in the latter case, the speaker has only one objective, to reproduce the opinion of a third party he does not implicate, but does not acknowledge either. Reported speech exercises this function through various linguistic means: (1) verbs of communication, (2) conditional of hearsay or (3) adverbs limiting the universe of discourse:

- (1) Les experts **affirment** que le dollar va remonter.
The experts **affirm** that the dollar will rise.
- (2) Le dollar **remonterait**.
The dollar **should** rise.
- (3) **Selon** les experts, le dollar va remonter.
According to the experts, the dollar is going to rise.

It is illusory to believe that the information is always of a factual nature, i.e. the information is reported speech. Only the context can indicate to what degree the speaker adheres to what he states, i.e. the speaker can act as a spokesperson:

- (4) (Les experts **affirment** que/Selon les experts,) le dollar va remonter. Ils ne se sont jamais trompés.
(The experts **affirm** that/According to the experts), the dollar is going to rise. They are never wrong.

or the speaker can assert:

- (4a) (Les experts **affirment** que/Selon les experts,) le dollar va remonter. C'est ce qu'ils disent.
The experts **affirm** that/According to the experts, the dollar is going to rise. It's what they say.

In example (4), the point of view of the speaker and that of the informant are superimposed. In example (4a), the statement offers

more than one point of view, that of the speaker as well as that of the informant, producing a heterogeneous result – multiple voices – which created the concept that Ducrot (1984) calls 'polyphony'. Example (4) illustrates that it is often necessary to enlarge the framework from a sentence to a paragraph, to go from the universe of speech introduced by *selon* or by a verb such as *affirmer* to another universe. Language sometimes uses terms which simultaneously establish *polyphony*, which means that a universe of speech automatically is dissociated from the speaker's universe of speech:

- (5) Les experts prétendent que le dollar va remonter.
The experts claim that the dollar is going to rise.

The verb *prétendre* thus indicates that the clause, *le dollar va remonter*, is presumably false. The opinion of the experts and that of the speaker are presented as divergent. According to Charolles (1997), the fact that the point of view, yielded by *selon*, can give way or not to the consent of the speaker may create difficulties for the delimiting of the universes of discourse, and therefore, can lead to misunderstandings.

Statements containing reported speech present some common semantic and enunciative features. They are composed of four elements: (1) the source, (2) the inference (which may be absent), (3) the position of the speaker (which may be neutral) and (4) an assertion (the noun clause in the case of sentences containing verbs of communication). Examples (2) and (3) represent *mediatization*, which integrates an intervention of a third party in the transmission of information. We would like to recall that the concept of *mediatization* or 'mediative' covers, according to Guentcheva (1994:8), 'facts reported, inferred facts and surprise facts'. This concept was introduced by Lazard (1956) in *Caractères distinctifs de la langue tadjik*, which studies the perfect tense in Tajiki giving a morphological support to this idea. Following this study, Guentcheva observed that some forms of the French tense system are able to express a 'mediative' value.

The forms with *selon* which we are going to analyse do not represent but one individual case of this question and their description, such as that of many adverbs, using various linguistic skills (Nølke 1993): syntax, pragmatics, semantic and analysis of speech. Depending on the terms introduced by *selon*, it is necessary to

separate cases where source, inference and position of the speaker are distinct (Section 1) from those where (Section 2) source, inference and position of the speaker can 'merge' (Section 2.2).

1. Separated Occurrence of Source of Information and Position of the Speaker

1.1. Source

By choosing *selon*, the speaker decides at the same time to state precisely the source of his knowledge. The source can be non-explicit. The generic term *source* is very likely to occur in this context:

- (6) Selon différentes sources, plus d'une cinquantaine de prisonniers sont atteints de tuberculose; au moins trois cents souffrent de pneumonie ou de divers problèmes respiratoires; et au moins autant sont victimes d'infections intestinales, de dysenteries amibiennes ou de coliques néphrétiques (*Le Monde*, 18 juin 1998).

According to different sources, more than fifty prisoners have tuberculosis; at least three hundred are suffering from pneumonia or from different respiratory diseases; and at least as many are victims of intestinal infections, amoebic dysentery or renal colic.

The source can be explicit and take the form of speakers introduced within the discourse, thus becoming for a certain period, the textual reference point:

- (7) A la veille du week-end, une chasse aux bonnes affaires menée par des fonds de pension avait permis au marché japonais de terminer à l'équilibre [...]. Selon les courtiers, cette vague d'achat apparaît dès que l'indice avoisine les 15 000 points (*Le Monde*, 12 mai 1998).

Just before the weekend, bargain hunting by pension funds had enabled the Japanese market to end on equilibrium [...]. According to the brokers, this buying spree appears as soon as the [Nikkei] index nears 15,000 points.

It is known that some adverbial sentences include a term of enunciation, for example, *à vrai dire, en deux mots* (to tell the truth, in two words). To give *selon le(s) dire(s) de N* (according to the assertion(s) of N) as a source of *selon N* is therefore not unreasonable. *Selon* introduces the nominalization of communication verbs and within this homogeneous semantic group, *dire* is considered as the standard communication verb, because unlike *prétendre* (to claim), it implies no presupposition (Charolles 1976):

- (8) Selon LE (dires/conclusions/jugement/révélation/aveux/prévisions/indications) des experts, la situation est critique. According to the expositions/assertions/conclusions/judgement/admissions/anticipations/indications of the experts, the situation is critical.

According to Gross (1975:190-193), some common syntactic characteristics have been highlighted for those communication verbs which introduce a noun clause; it justifies regrouping them in a class in spite of their varied linguistic behaviour, as noted by Charolles (1976:86-87). *Selon* can equally introduce predicative speech nouns with the verb *to have* as its support, as discussed in the paper 'Les compléments nominaux des verbes de parole' by Giry-Schneider 1994².

- (9) Selon LE (avis/idée/opinion/sentiment/point de vue) des experts, la situation est critique. According to the judgement/idea/opinion/feeling/point of view of the experts, the situation is critical.

We can enlarge these intellectual operations, represented by writings or by numbers, with the idea of an inherent message attached to these substantives:

- (10) Selon les statistiques nationales et internationales, la France est le premier pays récepteur du tourisme (*Le Monde*, 8 juillet 1997). According to national and international statistics, France is the country most visited by tourists.

The subjects of communication verbs are usually humans, as in example (11): *les experts indiquent*. However, it is possible to observe some distributional variations where the subject might be inanimate, non-human, as in the type *N of Nhum*:

- (11) Les statistiques (E/des experts) indiquent que la France est le premier pays récepteur du tourisme.
The statistics (E/of the experts) indicate that France is the country the most visited by tourists.

Guillet and Leclère (1992:249) note that this *métonymie d'humain* could be observed with other verbs.

Finally, some substantives introduced by *selon* are not the sources, as in the previous examples, since they are neither explicit or implicit. We will study this concept in detail in Section 2.1.

The source of knowledge gives information which can be processed and the mediatization process is involved there.

1.2. Mediatization

1.2.1. Inference

Depending on whether the information given by the source is processed or not by the speaker who is not the source (here, we therefore exclude the possibility of the form *selon moi* (*according to me*)), we speak of actual inference or null (or void) inference.

We would like to recall the two logical inference schemas: the *modus ponens* and the *modus tollens*. The *modus ponens* is constituted of two premises, (12a) the major $p \rightarrow q$, and (12b) the minor p ; the conclusion is q (12c):

- 12(a) When one has cried, one has red eyes (major).
12(b) Anne cried (minor);
12(c) Therefore Anne has red eyes (conclusion).

The *modus tollens* is characterised by the following schema:

- 13(a) Anne has red eyes (conclusion);
13(b) She must have cried (minor).

It is a matter of an inverted inference when the major premise (*when one has cried, one has red eyes*) is not explicit. In the first case (12a-c), the inference is necessary: p brings about q , therefore the reasoning is deductive. In the second case (13a-b), the inference is probable: being given that p brings about q , if one has q , then one may be p . In the latter example, there is a likely source and therefore, the reasoning is abductive.

Selon permits these two types of inferences, the *modus ponens* (14) and the *modus tollens* (15):

- (14) Selon les dernières statistiques de la chambre des notaires, la reprise de l'immobilier se confirme.
According to the latest statistics from the board of public notaries, the resumption of sales of real estate is confirmed.
(15) Selon les dernières statistiques de consommation, le moral des Français s'améliorerait.
According to the latest consumers' statistics, the French morale is said to have improved.

In the latter, the major premise is omitted: *quand on a le moral, on consomme*; the minor premise is: *les Français consomment*, and the conclusion therefore is: *le moral des Français s'améliorerait*.

The inference is therefore linked to the creation of information. In the statements where *selon* appears, we have distinguished cases where there is reported speech (null or void inference) from cases where the speech is an interpretation and where, following *selon*, there is inference. The inference is null when the deductive work is done by the source and when the speaker reproduces the conclusions without any modification:

- (16) Selon une étude du ministère de l'Emploi, 20% des jeunes en contrat par l'alternance ne terminent pas leur formation (*Libération*, 12 mai 1998).

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Employment, 20% of young people with an on-job/off-job training contract will not complete their training.

In the opposite case, there is inference: the speaker got from the source information which enabled her/him to infer a conclusion that is expressed:

- (17) Selon les dernières statistiques de la chambre des notaires, la reprise de l'immobilier se confirme.
According to the latest statistics of the board of public notaries, the resumption of real estate sales is confirmed.

The inferential schema is the following: *the previous statistics had indicated an increase; the latest statistics are better than the former ones; the increase continues therefore, and from this fact, it is confirmed.*

In certain cases, the level of precision of the context only indicates whether there is an inference or none:

- (18) Selon les dernières statistiques communiquées par la direction du tourisme [...]. Toujours selon la direction du tourisme, le nombre des vacanciers français a tendance à stagner... (*Le Monde*, 8 juillet 1997).
According to the latest statistics issued by the Tourist Board [...]. Always according to the Tourist Board, the number of French vacationers has a trend to stay flat [...].

Without any context, it is impossible to know if the inference is made by the speaker or by the source: either the Tourist Board gives itself the conclusion (*le nombre des vacanciers français a tendance à stagner*), or the speaker infers from data given by the Tourist Board.

We know that the verb *devoir* (*should/must/have to*), which has been analysed by Huot (1974) and Sueur (1979), is often described uniquely as a modal verb, meaning that the verb has a value of obligation or of probability; however it can also be used, as Lyons (1980:410-411) and Dendale (1994:25) note, 'in terms of the operation of the information created', which means that it contains an inferential value:

- (19) Le ministre a donné sa démission. Il doit être désavoué par le Président de la République.
The Minister submitted his resignation. He must have lost the President's confidence.

The first part of the sentence represents the minor premise. The second premise, the major, which is absent, would contain the following form: *Le ministre a été désavoué par le Président de la République, donc il a démissionné* (*The Minister had lost the confidence of the President of the Republic, therefore he resigned*). This premise, implicit in nature, is obviously one possible conclusion among others. However that may be, *devoir* (*should/must/have to*) authorises one conclusion by selecting one hypothesis among many, as is the case with *pouvoir* (*may*), as pointed out by Dendale and Tasmowski (1994). This information, created by the speaker, establishes an inferential interpretation of the verb *devoir*, which pre-empts the modal value. But it is frequent to find the verb *devoir*, in combination with *selon/d'après*, in this particular type of inferential function (Marque-Pucheu 2000b):

- (20) Selon les experts, le parc automobile européen devrait stagner autour de 31 millions de véhicules de tourisme par an. (*Courrier international* n° 360, 25 septembre au 1er octobre 1997).
According to the experts, the European automobile park should stay flat around 31 millions cars per year.
- (21) Outinord devrait enregistrer cette année une progression minimale de 30% [...] d'après l'actuel carnet de commandes (*Les Échos*, 5 août 1997).
This year Outinord should register an increase of at least 30% [...] according to the current order book.

An estimate is made starting from these premises, without providing a given number from 'l'actuel carnet de commandes'.

1.2.2. Position of the Speaker

How does one distinguish the part of reported speech from the opinion of the speaker? Borillo's study on introductory terms such as: *à en croire X, soi-disant, c'est ce que X dit, X suggère que, ou selon X (to believe in X; supposedly, it is what X says; or X suggests that)*, which often function as discourse markers, suggests a scale of distance assumed by the speaker, and according to Nølke (1994:84), a more or less significant 'linguistic dilution of responsibilities'. For Maingueneau (1991:136), there is a slight distance between the terms which authors generally attribute to *selon*, since the speaker indicates the source from which he or she has obtained the information. Therefore, the assertion is first and foremost that of a quoted third party before becoming that of the speaker.

Thus, when associated with the conditional, *selon* can introduce another universe of discourse. But we accept, as Martin (1983:149) states, that the 'conditional of borrowed information' is frequent; Haillet (1992) further pursues this idea by noting that this conditional is frequently found in a journalistic context. Acting as a sort of probability operator, *selon* can mark the disclaiming of the speaker or a partial attachment in regard to the veracity of the clause by presenting the information as uncertain:

- (22) La croissance, qui s'établirait à 2,3 % en 1997, dépasserait 3 % en rythme annuel au second semestre, selon l'Insee (*Tribune*, 4/5 juillet 1997).

According to the Insee, economic growth, which should be around 2.3% in 1997, should rise to 3% in year-to-year terms during the second half of the year.

The universe of speech within the scope of *selon*, which can extend to a full paragraph, will be dominated by this modality: the speaker obtains information from a third party or from quantified data, from which he distances him/herself, without necessarily contradicting the clause's content.

When *selon* introduces numerical data, the speaker seeks protection behind the numbers:

- (23) Selon les statistiques nationales et internationales, la France est le premier pays récepteur du tourisme (*Le Monde*, 8 juillet 1997).

According to national and international statistics, France is the country most visited by tourists.

And even the juxtaposition of a second source, such as in the following examples:

- (24) La manifestation rassemblait dix mille personnes selon les calculs des syndicats. Deux mille selon ceux de la Préfecture de police.

The demonstration gathered ten thousand persons according to the Trade Unions. Two thousand according to the police authorities.

or:

- (25) La manifestation rassemblait deux mille personnes selon les calculs de la Préfecture de police. Dix mille selon ceux des syndicats.

The demonstration gathered two thousand persons according to the police authorities. Ten thousand according to the Trade Unions.

does not permit inference of the opinion of the speaker.

The information in itself can become subject to an assertion in which the speaker does not take part:

- (26) Selon le ministre, qui a confirmé sa décision aux syndicats le 7 mai, le montant de cette réparation serait de 11,2 millions de francs, contre 23,3 prévus par la DCN. Les grévistes **refusent** d'entrer dans cette logique de marché, estimant, avec le délégué CGT Alain Bolla, que 'la réparation d'un bâtiment militaire ne peut revenir qu'à un établissement d'État ayant vocation de satisfaire les besoins de notre Marine nationale, souveraine et indépendante, sauf à glisser vers un processus de privatisation' (*Le Monde*, 12 mai 1998).

According to the Minister, who confirmed his decision to the Unions on 7 May, the amount of this repair contract would

be 11.2 million Francs, compared to 23.3 estimated by the DCN³. The strikers refuse to enter into this type of market driven logic, being of the opinion, with the CGT⁴ delegate Alain Bolla, that 'repairing a military vessel must be the responsibility of a State owned institution, dedicated to satisfy the needs of our National, sovereign, and independent Navy, on the penalty of sliding towards a process of privatisation'.

The data which are inferred by a third party (*le Ministre*) are immediately rejected by another third party (*les grévistes refusent*): the protagonists are left back to back.

In each case however, *selon* introduces a restriction by presenting only one opinion among others. The information is considered a priori as exact, worthy of belief. It is this fact that is highlighted by the test of *mais* (*but*):

- (27) Selon le témoin, la voiture roulait à gauche, mais c'est faux.
According to the witness, the car was driving on the left hand side, but this is false.
- (28) ??Selon le témoin, la voiture roulait à gauche, mais c'est vrai.
??According to the witness, the car was driving on the left hand side, but this is true.

The fact that we can oppose (corresponding to *mais*) *c'est faux* to the assertion of the witness indicates that it implicitly contains a favourable opinion. In contrast, we cannot oppose *c'est vrai*, which confirms that the assertion of the witness does not implicitly carry the judgement *c'est faux*. How then can we explain the possibility of the following sequences, both of which are logical?

- (29) Selon le témoin, la voiture roulait à gauche, ce qui est vrai.
According to the witness, the car was driving on the left hand side, which is true.
- (30) Selon le témoin, la voiture roulait à gauche, ce qui est faux.
According to the witness, the car was driving on the left hand side, which is false.

In the first case, I am explicit in my agreement, since *c'est vrai* is only implicit. In the second case, I restate the facts as I saw them, since *c'est vrai*, implicit in the previous case, may well influence my interlocutor and make her/him believe that I am in agreement with the witness. In conclusion, *selon le témoin*, without other specification, argues in the positive sense: there is at least one person to say that X, and this militates in favour of X. It is necessary, therefore, to explain our non-commitment if we do not want to be associated with the hypothesis that X.

This possibility of non-commitment offered by *selon* appears in some discourses where *selon* can assume a polemical character. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980:31) concludes that 'it is shocking to observe the obstinacy of subjects engaged in a polemic situation complaining about the treatment that their adversary inflicts upon their own statements'. Thus, the usage of *selon N* as an isolated assertive statement can express such non-commitment:

- (31) La voiture roulait-elle à gauche? – Oui, selon le témoin.
Was the car driving on the left hand side? Yes, according to the witness.

Here, *selon* has almost a corrective value; and within this debate, if the speaker and the witness are not going to necessarily occupy antagonistic positions such as *oui, c'est ce que prétend le témoin* (*yes, that is what the witness alleges*), the form, *selon le témoin*, implies that points of view other than the one expressed are possible. Usually, the apparent commitment or reservation is found subsequently in the discourse, going in meaning beyond the sentence including *selon*:

- (32) 'Yann Piat, déclare M^e Juramy, voulait tiédir ce chaudron du diable.' Le commanditaire, selon lui, ne peut donc se trouver que dans la classe politique locale. Et d'ailleurs, **comme sortie d'un chapeau**, il ajoute cette précision parfaitement inédite: 'Les commanditaires sont cinq. Trois voyous et deux politiques. Ils sont allés chercher des jeunes écervelés.' (*Le Monde*, 17 juin 1998)
'Yann Piat, declared the attorney Juramy, wanted to cool down this witches' cauldron.' The hidden partner, according to him, can only therefore be found within the local political scene. And anyway, **like pulling a rabbit from a hat**, he adds

this completely unexpected detail: 'The sleeping partners are five. Three criminals and two politicians. They went to look for the young harebrains.'

Depending on the attitude of the speaker, the point of inserting the adverb *selon* will be different. When the speaker distances him-/herself from the reported speech, the adverb which relativizes the validity of the statement will be analysed as: *Il est vrai selon N que P* (*it is true according to N that P*). If the speaker commits him-/herself, it is befitting to distinguish two cases. In the first case, the adverb indicates a judgement on the adequacy of the word in relation to the thought and there is a presupposition of veracity, as *selon N* can be paraphrased by: *je conviens avec N* (*I agree with N*) and the sentence which follows *selon* can serve as an argument for the speaker. In the second case, if there is not really a presupposed falsehood a priori, as in *N prétend* (*N alleges*), the non-commitment is justified further in the context. (For a complete analysis concerning *convenir* (*to agree*) and *prétendre* (*to allege*) see the chapter 'Propositions' by Berrendonner (1981:42) in *Éléments de Pragmatique Linguistique*.) Forms with *selon* are observed as much in a polemical discourse as in factual statements, for example in reports established by the Gendarmerie⁵.

2. Occurrence of Conjugated Elements (*N* or *N of N*)

In certain cases, the elements depending upon *selon* integrate the source and the position of the speaker.

2.1. Merging with Null Inference

The merging with null inference assumes that the speaker indicates his or her position; therefore, a form such as *selon les dires* (*according to the statements*) would be excluded. In fact, this statement includes a nominalization of the verb *dire* (*to say/to state*), a communicative verb which is neutral; due to this fact, the verb is not suited to reveal the position of the speaker. The presence of non-neutral terms of communication (nominalization of communication verbs different

from *to say/to state*) indicates, as in the following, the commitment of the speaker:

- (33) Selon les allégations de Max, *p*.
According to the allegations of Max, *p*.

The inference is systematically null, for the facts are reported without impartiality, and the speaker distances him-/herself openly. The sub-sequence, *les allégations de Max*, regroups the source (*Max*), the fact that we can not deduce anything from what he states (due to the absence of inference) and the position adopted by the speaker (*allégations*).

2.2. Merging with Inference

We would like to study some forms where specific nouns occur:

- (34) Les prix ont augmenté. Selon toute (évidence/vraisemblance/probabilité/logique), les autorités monétaires pourraient augmenter les taux à court terme.
Prices have increased. According to all (evidence/likelihood/probability/logic), the monetary authorities could raise the short term rate.

These quasi-fixed adverbs can be analysed as modals (Traugott 1989):

- (35) Selon toute (évidence/vraisemblance/probabilité), les autorités monétaires pourraient augmenter les taux à court terme.
According to all (evidence/likelihood/probability), the monetary authorities could raise the short term rate.

The previous statement is equivalent to:

- (36) Il est (évident/ vraisemblable/ probable) que les autorités monétaires pourraient augmenter les taux à court terme.
It is (evident/likely/probable) that the monetary authorities could raise the short term rate.

As this example indicates, the adverbs in effect reveal the attitude of the speaker towards the enunciation, with an implicit but readily explicable *pour moi* (*for me*): the speaker accepts this as his/her own personal judgement. We note that this condition does not exist in regard to: *Il est invraisemblable/improbable que p* (*it is unlikely/improbable that p*), which cannot have a form such as: **Selon toute invraisemblance/improbabilité* (**in all unlikelihood/improbability*). In a similar manner, *Il est faiblement vraisemblable/probable que p* (*it is faintly likely/probable that p*) does not have as its equivalent: **Selon une faible vraisemblance/probabilité, p* (**according to a faint likelihood/probability, p*).

Selon is highly integrative, i.e. it can extend into many clauses. Charolles (1997:43) asserts there is 'a general principle of attachment to the left, foreseeing that every forthcoming clause, with the exception of an opposing indication, was inscribed in the last universe [of discourse] expressed'. From this point, the extent of *selon* integrates many deductions. But, *Il est invraisemblable/improbable que p* (*it is unlikely/improbable that p*) or *Il est peu vraisemblable/probable que p* (*It is little likely/probable that p*) do not authorise, for semantic reasons, an inference: the quantifiers *peu, ne... pas* (*little, no/not*) and the allomorphs, *in-/im-*, have a limited extension within the sentence constituents or the sentence itself.

There is no way to reduce these forms to modal adverbs, for two reasons. On the one hand, even if *for me* is implicit, it is not exclusive, as in: *selon toute évidence/vraisemblance/probabilité/logique* (*according to all evidence/likelihood/probability/logic*), which implicate a validity for each and every choice. On the other hand, there exists a link between these forms with *selon* and the other forms of reported speech, since we can equally apply to the first forms the concepts previously used: source, inference and the position of the speaker. The source here is implicit (*for me*). In this case, there is inference, because the information supplied by the source implies a processing. Starting from some information coming from possibly multiple sources, the speaker can infer a conclusion of likelihood: *selon toute probabilité* (*according to all likelihood*); evidence: *selon toute évidence* (*according to all evidence*); and so forth. The position of the speaker is necessarily committed because it is the speaker who makes the deduction, which is not always the case with other forms of *selon*. The source, the reference and the position of the speaker merge.

Conclusion

The concepts used here allow us to define a general common schema for statements with *selon*. In this connection, it is important to know: firstly, the source which permits acquisition and storage of information; secondly, the inference which allows the introduction of elements derived from the information; and thirdly, the identification of the position of the speaker. The first two steps correspond to *je sais* (*I know*) and the third to *je crois/je ne crois pas* (*I believe so/I do not believe so*), following the study by Vet (1994). Marque-Pucheu (2000a) argues that the extension of the adverbial that is appropriated to the enunciation dictates the use of these concepts: we do not simply indulge in a description of formal regularities (Marque-Pucheu 1995), but we describe, as well, the linguistic operations revealed by the speaker, who plays a central role in the operations of modalization and of inference. However, the semantic and structural nature of the sub-sequence which follows *selon* (human, non-human metonymic of the human, the semantic nature of the speech verb nominalized), and forms of the type *selon tout(e) N* play a crucial role in the variations of the definition in our schema: according to the nature of the sub-sequence, source and position of the speaker will (or will not) be one and the same.

Finally, statements with *selon* are not always limited to a single sentence. Being limited to a sentence, *selon* cannot always take into account the expression of the position of the speaker; according to Berrendonner (1981:42), 'every sentence which relates the intentions of a third party, insofar as it opposes an affirmation that the speaker would have been able to make, but refused to accomplish, is arguably ambiguous'.

We have demonstrated that *selon* exhibits, above all, one point of view among several others and that a priori, there is a presupposition of veracity. However, the speaker remains independent in respect of this point of view and has total freedom of commitment; take, for example, the incongruity of *selon toute certitude* (**in all certainty*), which does not leave the speaker a choice. The non-commitment is often inferred from the right of the sentence including *selon*. Equally, this comment goes for the inference which, having been outlined in the sentence including *selon*, is often developed later. As a result, the study of the right context of the sentence allows us, on

many occasions, to eliminate the ambiguities and to specify whether or not the inference is null.⁶

UFR de langue française
Université Paris IV-la Sorbonne
 2 rue Victor Cousin
 75230 PARIS Cedex 05

Notes

1. In French, *selon* has different meanings; in the original French text the author clearly distinguishes the idea of *selon* from that which infers *conforming to* as in 'conforming to the leasing contract, the renter does not have the right to sub-let' and that of *suivant* which also maintains a similar semantics such as: *according to the dictionary...* For our purpose, *selon* will be employed as *according to*.
2. These nouns can be complements of some appropriate speech verbs such as *to emit* or *to formulate*.
3. DCN is the Direction des Constructions Navales (Direction of Naval Construction).
4. CGT is the Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Workers). It is an active trade union that defends the moral, material, economic and professional rights of employees.
5. The French Gendarmerie is equivalent to a State Police Force.
6. I would like to extend my appreciation to Danielle Leeman and Jacqueline Giry-Schneider for their numerous comments which enabled me to enlarge the original conception of this study. It is a pleasure for me to acknowledge a debt to Ellin Brown and Tim Pooley who have contributed to its final form.

References

- Berrendonner, Alain. 1981. *Éléments de pragmatique linguistique*. Paris: Minuit.
 Borillo, Andrée. 1985. *Discours ou métadiscours*. DRLAV 32.47-61.
 Charolles, Michel. 1976. *Exercices sur les verbes de communication*. Pratiques 9.83-107.

- Charolles, Michel. 1997. *L'encadrement du discours: univers, champs, domaines, et espaces*. Cahiers de recherche linguistique 6. Nancy 2.
 Dendale, Patrick. 1994. *Devoir épistémique, marqueur modal ou évidentiel?* Langue française 102.24-40.
 Dendale, Patrick, and Tasmowski Liliane. 1994. *Pouvoir_E: un marqueur d'évidentialité*. Langue française 102.41-55.
 Ducrot, Oswald. 1984. *Le dit et le dire*. Paris: Minuit.
 Giry-Schneider, Jacqueline. 1994. *Les compléments nominaux des verbes de parole*. Langages 115.103-125.
 Gross, Maurice. 1975. *Méthodes en syntaxe*. Paris: Hermann.
 Guentcheva, Zlatka. 1994. *Manifestations de la catégorie du médiatif dans les temps du français*. Langue française 102.8-23.
 Guillet, Alain, and Leclère Christian. 1992. *La structure des phrases simples en français*. Genève: Droz.
 Haillet, Pierre. 1992. *Emplois 'journalistiques' du conditionnel en français contemporain*. Essai de linguistique descriptive. Diss. University of Toronto.
 Huot, Hélène. 1974. *Le verbe DEVOIR: Etude synchronique et diachronique*. Paris, Klincksieck.
 Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Cathérine. [1980]. *Le discours polémique*. Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon.
 Lazard, Gilbert. 1956. *Caractères distinctifs de la langue tadjik*. Bulletin de la société linguistique 52.117-186.
 Lyons, John. 1980. *Sémantique linguistique*. Paris: Larousse.
 Maingueneau, Dominique. 1991. *L'analyse du discours. Introduction aux lectures de l'archive*. Paris: Hachette.
 Marque-Pucheu, Christiane. 1995. *Structures prépositionnelles semi-figées Prép C₁ de N₂: verbes supports associés et structure interne*. Thèse. Université de Paris VIII.
 Marque-Pucheu, Christiane. 2000a. *À mon avis et à mon goût: jugement de réalité et jugement de valeur*. Actes du XXII^e Congrès international de linguistique et philologie romanes, Bruxelles, 23-29 juillet 1998, Vol. VII.
 Marque-Pucheu, Christiane. 2000b. *'Les différentes valeurs de devoir dans les énoncés comportant selon'*, Actes du colloque Les verbes modaux dans les langues germaniques et romanes, Anvers 1998. Paris: Klincksieck (forthcoming).
 Martin, Robert. 1983. *Pour une logique du sens*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
 Nølke, Henning. 1993. *Le regard du locuteur*. Paris: Kimé.
 Nølke, Henning. 1994. *La dilution linguistique des responsabilités*. Langue française 102.84-94.

Sueur, Jean-Pierre. 1979. Une analyse sémantique des verbes *devoir* et *pouvoir*. *Le Français moderne* XLVII.97-118.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1989. On the rise of epistemic meanings in English. *Language* 65.31-55.

Vet, Co. 1994. *Savoir* et *croire*. *Langue française*. 102.56-68.