# *Voilà voilà*: Extensions of Deictic Constructions in French

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## 1. Introduction

French deictic locatives *voilà* 'there is' and *voici* 'here is' occur at first glance with greatly varying meanings and somewhat less varying syntax, as the examples in (1) attest. Their extensive variation defies classical categorization in terms of grammatical or discourse elements.

(1)    (a) *Nous y voilà, enfin arrivés.*
          We've finally arrived.

    (b) *Voici son sac.*
          Here's his bag.

    (c) *Voilà le moment que nous attendions.*
          Here's the moment we've been waiting for.

    (d) *Voilà deux heures que ça pue la vache.*
          That's two hours it's smelled like cow.

    (e) *Voilà que la fin approche.*
          Now the end is coming.

    (f)  *Voilà mon oncle content.*
        Now there's my uncle happy.

    (g)  *Voilà des étudiants de Berkeley.*
        There're some Berkeley students.

    (h)  *En voilà des étudiants!*
        Now there're some students (for you)!

    (i)  *Voici le but de la discussion…*
        Here's the point of the discussion…

The present study is a cognitive semantic analysis of the different senses of *voilà* and *voici* found above, as well as their syntax.[1]

## 1.1. Some historical background on *voilà* and *voici*

*Voilà* and *voici* derive historically from imperative forms of the verb 'to see', which in Modern French has the form *voir*, plus a deictic locative adverb, either *ci* 'here' or *lá* 'there', both of which still exist as clitics in Modern French.  Very early attested forms maintained verbal inflection and permitted certain pronouns to come between the verbal form and the locative clitic (2).

(2)    *veez me là*
        'Here I am' (Le Mort le Roi Artu)

At least as early as the 14th century, however, these forms both lost their inflection and became agglomerated into a single lexical item, as their orthography and invariability of form in (1) show.

    Additionally, *voilà* and *voici* were historically used to differentiate between proximal and distal relations, as *ci* and *là* still do (3). At present, *voilà* and *voici* are mostly interchangeable without semantic effect, with *voilà* generally used and *voici* becoming less common among younger speakers.

(3)    (a)  *Tu parles de ce type-là?*
          Are you talking about that guy there?

       (b)  *Non, de ce type-ci!*
          No, about this guy here!

## 1.2. Previous accounts

Previous accounts of *voilà* and *voici*, as Moignet (1969) points out, have labelled them according either to traditional parts of speech ("syntactic" properties) or discourse function ("pragmatic" properties) (4):

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[1] For those constructions where *voici* displays the same behavior as *voilà*, we will focus on *voilà*. For those cases where they differ, we will make explicit mention of that divergence.

(4)    (a)  Prepositions (Girault-Duvivier 1851)

       (b)  Adverbs (Brunot and Bruneau 1969)

       (c)  Verbs (Moignet 1969)

       (d)  Presentatives (Grenoble and Riley 1996, Lambrecht 1981)

       (e)  Interjections (Nyrop 1914)

       (f)  Factives (Damourette and Pichon 1927)

We argue that grammatical classifications based on classic categorization like those described above are insufficient since *voilà* displays both non-prototypical behavior in terms of traditional grammatical categories and a sufficiently wide range of semantic and pragmatic "senses" to defy a monotonic classification of its meaning.

### 1.3.  Structure of the present analysis

The present analysis involves: (1) positing distinct word senses where semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic properties between uses differ (Brugman 1980; Lakoff 1987); (2) categorizing each sense of *voilà* based on its own behavior, rather than trying to determine a single grammatical class for it (van Oosten 1986); and (3) determining the systematic relations between the different senses of a given word, including metaphor, metonymy, and constructional grounding (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Sweetser 1990, and Johnson 1998).

Our goal is to: (1) give semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic descriptions of the multiple senses of *voilà*; (2) show how some syntactic properties follow from semantic and pragmatic properties; and (3) show how the independent senses are related or independently motivated.

The cases of *voilà* and *voici* are interesting in terms of the questions above first because they constitute a family of constructions that are organized in a radial category through metaphor, metonymy, constructional grounding, and other cognitive mechanisms. More importantly, these forms display close ties to the speech contexts they occur in and the pragmatic information they convey for the simple reason that they communicate more than just a proposition. As deictics, they are grounded in space and time relative to the speaker and/or hearer. Additionally, they entail communicative acts relying upon the current state of the interlocutor and instructions to change that state. Thus, the pragmatics of the speech context in which each sense is used and the particular semantics of the domain to which it is extended motivate the restrictions to each extension.

## 2. The Central Deictic

### 2.1.  So you say you found the central case.

Following Lakoff (1987), we will describe the central sense of locative deictics in terms of an Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) (ibid.) or primary scene (Grady & Johnson 1997) of "Pointing Out"(☞).  This is an experiential gestalt that is common and crucial in young children's linguistic and non-linguistic interaction.

> It is assumed as a background that some entity exists and is present at some location in the speaker's visual field, that the speaker is directing his attention at it, and that the hearer is interested in its whereabouts but does not have his attention focused on it and may not even know that it is present.  The speaker then directs the hearer's attention to the location of the entity (perhaps accompanied by a pointing gesture) and brings it to the hearer's attention that the entity is at the specified location […] (Lakoff 1987:490).

Of the elements in this ICM, *voilà* and *voici* explicitly encode both a directive to focus attention (*voi-*) and the location of the entity (*-ci* or *-là*). Their direct object is the entity pointed out. Uses of *voilà* and *voici* corresponding to this sense can be found in (5) below:

(5)    (a) *Voilà les clés que tu cherchais.*
            There are the keys you were looking for.

     (b) *Voici son sac.*
            Here's his bag.

Although there is no accepted means by which to gather direct evidence that this is indeed the central sense of the radial category of senses of *voilà* and *voici*, we can marshal three kinds of circumstantial evidence.  First, although a language's historical and children's cognitive/linguistic development are not always identical (Rice & Cuyckens 1998), there are many informative parallels between the two (Sweetser 1990).  At the very least, the historical development and the acquisition data both show cognitive connections that humans can make. Historically, *voilà* and *voici* are compositionally *voi* 'see-IMP' and *là* 'there' or *ci* 'here', which belong to the domain of spatial perception, suggesting that this is the more primary or more central case.  Second, category research (Rosch and Lloyd 1978) has shown that prototypicality effects play a crucial role in category organization, and that prototypes are experientially more basic than either other members of the category in question or components of the prototype (i.e. gestalts).  The spatial sense, in comparison with the others described below, fulfills these characteristics.  Third, the spatial domain is the source domain of metaphors that map onto the target domain realms of discourse, time, and other conceptual domains to which *voilà* and *voici* are applied.

### 2.2. The Syntax

The basic structure of the Central Deictic is a construction with the following minimal specification: a deictic locative adverb (i.e. *voilà* or *voici*) and a noun phrase (which we show to be the direct object of the construction). In this section we will discuss some of the formal properties of the Central Deictic, including its relation to the declarative and imperative verbal modes, and the possibility of embedding it.

### 2.2.1. *Voilà*: Declarative or Imperative (or Both)?

The central Deictic's NP can be either a pronominal or a full NP, which can optionally include modifiers of all sorts and can be definite or indefinite (6)

(6)  (a)  Mod + N                          *Voilà ton petit frère.*
                                           There's your little brother.

     (b)  indefinite determiner + N        *Voilà un(des) oiseau(x).*
                                           There's a(some) bird(s).

     (c)  definite determiner  + N         *Voilà le roi.*
                                           There's the king.

     (d) N + relative clause               *Voilà Paul qui pleure.*
                                           There's Paul crying.

     (e) N + gerundial phrase              *Voilà Marie travaillant.*
                                           There's Marie working.

The pronominalization of the NP in the central deictic shows that the NP is the direct object of *voilà* and that its syntax is like a declarative sentence, though the action of "pointing out" funtions similarly to an imperative. The pronoun used in the *voilà* construction is a direct object pronoun placed before *voilà* (7a), like the declarative (7b), but unlike the affirmative imperative, which places the pronoun after the verb (7c). Note that the negative imperative (7d) places the direct object pronoun before the verb.

(7)  (a)  *Voilà les clés que tu cherchais.*      *Les voilà.*
          There's the keys you were looking for.   There they are.

     (b)  *Je vois les clés que tu cherchais.*     *Je les vois.*
          I see the keys you were looking for.     I see them.

     (c)  *Apporte les clés que je cherchais.*         *Apporte-les.*
          Bring the keys I was looking for.        Bring them.

     (d)  *N'apporte pas les clés.*                *Ne les apporte pas.*
          Don't bring the keys.                    Don't bring them.

This is also true for the cases where the NP is preceded by an indefinite article (partitive NP's), where the pronoun *en* 'some', patterns

like the direct object pronouns above, coming before the verb for declarative and *voilà* constructions, but after the verb in imperative constructions.

(8)  *Voilà des étudiants de Berkeley.     En voilà.*
    There're some Berkeley students.    There are some.

A possible explanation for *voilà*'s acquisition of declarative pronominalization patterns is that it has a conventionalized propositional content, specifically, not only 'look at that thing there,' as the imperative would indicate, but additionally, 'that thing is there'. The conventional presence of this proposition can be shown by the *Oui, je sais* test (Jones 1996:181). If a sentence can be answered with *Oui, je sais* 'yes, I know', then a proposition has been expressed. Note that this works for both declarative (9a) and *voilà* constructions (9b), but fails for imperatives (9c).

(9)   (a)  *-Je lui ai parlé hier.*        *-Oui, je sais.*
            I talked to her yesterday.             Yes, I know.

      (b)  *-Voilà tes clés.*              *-Oui, je sais.*
            There are your keys.          Yes, I know.

      (c)  *-Regardez les petites vaches!*   *-*Oui, je sais.*
            Look at the cute little cows!    Yes, I know.[2]

The *voilà* construction differs from other declarative sentences in some respects, however. One of the more obvious ways is that there is no explicit subject, which is true for the imperative, as well. This suggests that the pragmatics of the "pointing out" scene surfaces in the syntax of the construction. In pro-drop languages, the subject pronoun can be omitted when the subject is known to the speaker and interlocutor. The same is true for imperatives and *voilà* constructions in French (which is not pro-drop) because of their semantics; both have understood subjects, namely, the interlocutor. The central *voilà* construction was historically an imperative, which may also account for the origin of the lack of an explicit subject.

The central *voilà* case also does not allow indirect objects, thus behaving like a strict transitive verb (10).

(10)  (a)  *Regarde-moi ce livre.*
            See (look at) this book for me.

      (b)  *\*Voilà-moi ce livre.*     or      *\*Me voilà ce livre.*
            There's that book for me.

      (c)  *\*Il m'y a ce livre.*

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[2] This sentence would only be felicitous if the speaker were confirming the illocutionary meaning indirectly expressed: "I want you to look at the entity" or "There is some reason to look at the entity". However, it is not possible to respond affirmatively to the directive itself.

There is this book for me.

We claim that this constraint, which is neither like a declarative nor like an imperative, derives from the semantics of the Pointing-Out ICM. In French, most any construction can acquire an indirect object via the well-documented benefactive/adversative construction, exemplified in (9) (Smith 1997). The semantics of these indirect object adding constructions, however conflicts with the propositional content of *voilà*, which describes a state of affairs. The same is true for *il y a*, the French existential construction, which in essence describes a state of affairs and whose semantics is not compatible with the idea of performing an action for the benefit of, or to the detriment of, another participant.

Another way in which the pragmatics of the Pointing-Out ICM surfaces is that speakers tend not to use the first person as the direct object in the Central Deictic, unless it is in a different mental space (in a picture, movie, narrative, etc…), where the first person is not the speaker but a representation of the speaker (11).

(11)  (a)  *Me voilà l'été dernier* [pointing to a picture].
           There I am last summer.

      (b)  *?Me voilà/voici.*
           There/here I am.

Note that the questionable sense we mean in (11b) is not the case where it indicates the recent arrival of the speaker, which we discuss below as the Now Deictic, but the case where the speaker is present, has been present, and indicates his or her location to the interlocutor. English 'there' shows the same distribution; this constraint may derive from the pragmatics of the ICM: *voilà* presupposes that both speaker and hearer know the location of speaker and hearer. Therefore, if the location of the speaker is not known, which would be presupposed by *me voilà* 'here I am', *voilà* is incompatible with the speech context.

### 2.2.2. Embedding

Like other verbs expressing propositions, *voilà* can be embedded in a relative clause, modifying its subject, direct object, or indirect object (12). The meaning of this combination of constructions is predictable from their compositional semantics, namely, the relativized main clause NP is in the speech context and is pointed out parenthetically.

(12)  (a)  *L'homme que voilà est mon amant.*
           The man (who is) there is my lover.

      (b)  *Mon frère a vu l'homme que voilà dans un quartier riche.*
           My brother saw that man (who is) there in a rich neighborhood.

      (c)  *J'ai parlé à la femme que voilà.*

I talked to that woman (who is) there.

This is another way in which the central *voilà* construction patterns with declaratives, as imperatives can not be placed in relative clauses:

(13)  (a)  *\*J'ai vu l'homme que regarde!*
           I saw the man who look (imperative) at him!

      (b)  *\*Je l'ai donné à l'homme que frappe!*
           I gave it to the man who hit (imperative) (him)!

Other cases where the verb does not express a proposition, such as questions and exhortations alse defy relativization:

(14)  (a)  *\*J'ai vu l'homme que connais-tu?*
           I saw the man whom do you know?

All of this is evidence that (1) *voilà* is acting as a verb with a direct object in terms of relative clause structure, and (2) that it expresses a proposition.

In terms of synchronic behavior and in terms of historical development, the Central *voilà* construction has some aspects of imperatives, some aspects of declaratives, and some unique properties. We have shown above that the distribution of these aspects is non-random but rather is based on pragmatic and semantic factors, which account for the historical retention and acquisition of certain features of the syntax.

### 2.3. The Event Deictic

*Voilà* can also be used to point out an event, rather than an object. Syntactically, in this construction, *voilà* is followed by *que* (a complementizer) and a finite clause.[3] This is much like the central case, except that instead of a simple noun phrase indicating an object, *que* + finite clause (15) or NP infinitival phrase indicates an event or action (16).[4]

(15)  (a)  *Je savais que Marie embrassait Paul.*
           I knew that Marie was kissing Paul.

      (b)  *Voilà que Marie part.*
           There's Marie leaving.

In French, the event expressed as the direct object of *laisser* 'to leave', and verbs of perception can alternatively be an infinitival phrase. *Voilà* patterns with verbs of perception either because it is preserving formal

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[3] Just as with expressions of objects in the Central Deictic, events are not anchored exclusively to the present perceptual space, but, rather, can exist in alternative mental spaces, such as in a narrative: Voilà que nous sommes dans la forêt… 'There we are in the forest…'

[4] A negative exclamation of the Event Deictic is also used by some speakers: Ne voila-t-il pas qu'il se fache! '(I'll be damned) If he isn't getting mad!'

aspects of voir or because the "pointing out" part of its semantics has to do with perception. However the *que* + finite form seems to be preferred by speakers, perhaps for functional reasons: (1) they are identical to simple declaratives; and (2) they are less restricted than their infinitival counterparts and appear more frequently in the language in general (in part because they are not restricted to perceptual verbs).

(16)  (a) *Paul a laisser parler le président.*
           Paul let the President speak.

      (b) *Voilà Marie partir (partir Marie).*
           There's Marie leaving.

The above patterning is related to a less central aspect of the Pointing Out ICM that also surfaces in English: that of pointing out not only an object but an event it is taking part in. This is a characteristic not simply of the Pointing-Out ICM, but rather of expressions of perception in general, as is the case for English. Additionally, the possibility of expressing events as objects with nominal properties derives from EVENTS ARE OBJECTS (EVENT STRUCTURE METAPHOR).

An interesting difference between the object Central Deictic and the Event Central deictic is that the object case will serve as a source domain for many of the extensions from the central Deictic discussed below, although it will do so for one non-metaphorical extension (the Now Deictic, Section 3.3). In the metaphorical extensions, the metaphor that selects the source domain takes some aspect of the spatial domain with reference to objects, and not to events, while the Now Deictic is an extension which is derived through metonymy and pragmatics, and has to do with events. In the next section, we discuss extensions from the Central Deictic in detail.

## 3. Extensions

Radial categories (Lakoff 1987, Brugman 1981, Lindner 1981) are polysemy networks where connections between senses are created through metonymy, metaphor, and other cognitive processes. The rest of the meanings discussed in this paper will be shown to extend directly or indirectly from the Central Deictic and so will preserve most of the structure we have discussed above. Our observations will confirm Moore's (1998) claim that deixis is retained in metaphorical extensions.

### 3.1. The Discourse Deictic

An important extension from the Central Deictic is to the domain of discourse. The Discourse Deictic inherits the syntactic structure of the Central Deictic, with restrictions that derive from its particular pragmatics. This extended sense of *voilà* is mapped through the metaphors: DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE, DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE

ENTITIES, DISCOURSE IS MOTION ALONG A PATH, IMMEDIATELY PAST DISCOURSE IS IN OUR PRESENCE AT A DISTANCE FROM US, and DISCOURSE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS MOVING TOWARDS US. These are attested elsewhere both in English and in French (17).

(17) (a) *Quand arrive-t-on à la partie interessante de l'histoire?*
        When are we going to get to the interesting part of the story?

   (b) *Je n'ai pas pu suivre la discussion.*
        I couldn't follow the discussion.

As has been previously shown for other languages (Lakoff 1987, Fillmore 1997), the proximal form, *voici*, is used to indicate discourse elements that will occur in the near future (18a), whereas the distal form, *voilà*, points to discourse elements that occurred in the recent past (18b). Note that although the central deictic allows a somewhat free exchange of the proximal and distal forms, here the distinction is maintained. This is most likely related to the continued presence in French of the contrast between locational clitics *-ci* (and *ici*) 'here' and *-là* (and *là*) 'there'.

(18) (a) *Voici deux exemples.*
        Here are two examples (to come).

   (b) *Voilà un bon point.*
        There's a good point (that's just been made).

It should be noted that the use of these metaphors is not unique to the domain of discourse. *Voilà* and *voici* can be used in a similar way with other domains which involve sequences of events occuring over time, such as events in movies or games (19).

(19) (a) *Voici la partie du film dont je t'avais parlé.*
        Here's the part of the film I told you about.

   (b) *Voilà le point crucial du jeu.*
        There was the crux of the game.

### 3.2. The Central Time Deictic

Another minor extension of the central deictic is what we refer to as the Central Time Deictic. This sense is mapped by the metaphors TIME IS SPACE, POINTS IN TIME ARE POINTS IN SPACE. It is used to refer to points in time with the same structure that we use to refer to objects in space. This metaphor is also common in other constructions throughout the French language.

Because the structure of the Central Time Deictic is so closely related to the ICM of pointing out, some interesting restrictions apply. Recall that the Central Deictic is used to point to elements within the field of vision of the speaker and hearer. The metaphors TIME IS SPACE, and POINTS IN

TIME ARE POINTS IN SPACE map the location of the speaker and hearer onto a one dimensional "time line," thus the only elements, or instants, that are within their field of vision are those points on the line that the speaker and hearer occupy. We find that this metaphor only works for points in time, not a span of time, and for instants at the time of the utterance only (20).

(20)  (a)  *Voilà l'instant que nous attendions tous.*
           Here's the moment we've all been waiting for.

      (b)  *\*Voilà la journée que j'attendais.*
           Here's the day I've been waiting for.

      (c)  *\*Voilà l'instant quand tu vas arriver.*
           There's the instant when you will arrive.

Due to the pragmatic restrictions on this construction, pronominalization of the NP and unmodified NPs are possible but pragmatically dispreferred. This results from the fact that in order to pronominalize or use an unmodified NP, both the speaker and hearer must be previously aware of this referent.

### 3.3. The Now Deictic

The next extension of the central deictic is not a metaphorical mapping, but one that is derived from both metonymy and pragmatics. The Now Deictic is the sense of *voilà* that we translated as "now," but the meaning now includes the idea of the present time, as opposed to the Central Deictic. It has a particular intonation pattern in many cases, with a rise in pitch across the word *voilà*. The clause is often preceded by *et* 'and' or *mais* 'but' to emphasize the consequentiality of the clause.

When we point an element out to our listener who was previously unaware of it, it is often because this element has recently arrived in our field of vision, and was not present there a moment before. The fact that two states of affairs (i.e. presence and arrival) are commonly co-associated with this construction and that the sentence is frequently ambiguous between the two senses can give rise to a secondary meaning. Other works (Sweetser 1990 and C. Johnson 1998) discuss this process more thoroughly. Proof that this is indeed an independent sense from the Central Deictic and not merely implicit in it comes from its divergent syntax and pragmatics.

The Now Deictic, as opposed to the Central Deictic, requires the locational complement to be specified, whether pronominalized (21b) or not (21a).[5]

(21)  (a)  *Nous voilà au labo.*

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[5] The sentences in (21) might be uttered by a tour guide.

Now here we are in the lab.

 (b) *Nous y voilà.*
  Now here we are.

That this sense is different from the Central Deictic is shown by the possibility of referring to an object or event that is not necessarily in the perceptual realm of the speaker, but when the state described by the NP is expected to obtain at a certain time (22).

(22) (a) *Voilà mon prof au labo.*
   Now my prof is in the lab [looking at watch].

  (b) *Voilà que mon frère part.*
   Now my brother's leaving.

Recall that in the Central Deictic, the use of first person was uncommon, due to conflicting presuppositions of the context and the potential construction. The first person is commonly used in the Now Deictic (21), however, another indication that the construction has a different set of presuppositions from the Central Deictic, as it is an independent sense of *voilà*.

## 3.4. Stative Deictic

A characteristic of radial categories in general is that extensions can give birth to second-degree extensions. In other words, not all extensions of a radial category must be directly extended from that central case; they can be extensions from other extensions. While this phenomenon has been discussed for lexical polysemy networks (Lakoff 1987, Brugman 1981) and for subjecthood (Van Oosten 1986), the idea that families of constructions might also display this behavior is a novel one (although inheritance of inherited constructions is discussed for the SAI construction in Fillmore 1998).

The Stative Deictic is mapped through the metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS from the Now Deictic. It inherits the structure, the stress pattern, and the tendency to occur with *et* 'and' or *mais* 'but' from the Now Deictic. Instead of a specified locational complement, it requires a stative complement, such as an adjective or the *qui*+verb construction (functionally similar to the gerund in English). The meaning that emerges is that a person is now in a state that they previously were not in.

(23) (a) *Voilà mon oncle content.*
   Now my uncle's happy.

  (b) *Voilà mon frère qui pleure.*
   Now my brother's crying.

  (c) *Me voilà partie.*
   Now I'm gone.

Note that the sentence in (23b) can also have a Central Deictic meaning if the *qui*+verb is modifying the noun phrase, where the speaker is pointing out this brother as opposed to some other brother (restrictive). It can also have the central meaning when the *qui*+verb is actually a descriptor of an action being pointed out (non-restrictive). These two uses are distinguished from the Now sense by the fact that in the Now sense the speaker doesn't have to be pointing at the object performing the action; moreover, the object doesn't even have to be in the visual field of the speaker or hearer.

This metaphor, STATES ARE LOCATIONS, is rampant elsewhere in both French and English (24). In the *voilà* sentences in (23) above, the fact that *voilà* takes a state descriptor in place of the locative descriptor from the Central deictic shows that this metaphor is present. In the examples below, prepositions and verbal predicates encode this replacement, but this is a general fact about the expression of states in French.

(24)   (a)  *Elle est en colère.*
             She's angry.

       (b)  *Il est tombé dans les pommes.*
             He passed out. (literally, 'he fell in the apples')

### 3.5. Span of Time/Distance Deictic

As additional evidence of the phenomenon of second-degree constructional extensions, we present the Span of Time/Distance Deictic, which motivates sentences like those in (25).

(25)   (a)  *Voilà deux heures que ça pue la vache.*
             Now it's been stinking cow for two hours.

       (b)  *Voilà deux kilomètres que ça pue la vache.*
             Now it's been stinking cow for two kilometers.

We analyze this construction as a blend, based on the fact that there exists one other construction that shares the particular syntax of these forms: X NP[span of time] *que* finite phrase. (We know of no others.) We will call this the Span of Time Construction. Specifically, X can be either *ça fait* 'it's been' or *il y a* 'it's been', as in (26).

(26)   (a)  *Ça fait deux ans que je vous attend.*
             I've been waiting for you for two years.

       (b)  *Il y a deux ans que j'habite dans ce quartier.*
             I've been living in this neighborhood for two years.

The explanation of the motivation for this sense of *voilà* is more complicated than for the previous examples. We claim that once *voilà* has

aquired the meaning of 'now', as in the Now Deictic, it is available to undergo a kind of constructional blend with the time constructions in (26) above. On the semantic side, this blend essentially takes this sense of *voilà* ('now') and adds to it the sense associated with the Span of Time Construction ('it has been X time that Y'), yielding 'it has now been X time that Y'. In other words, while *ça fait* and *il y a* can be placed in the future or past, *voilà* is anchored in the time of the utterance (27). On the syntactic side, the syntax is identical to that of the Span of Time Construction.

(27)  (a)  *Il y aura/Ça fera/*Voilà deux ans qu'on se connaitra.*
           It will have been two years that we will have known each other.

      (b)  *Il y avait/Ça faisait/?Voilà deux ans qu'on se connaissait.*
           It was for two years that we had known each other.

The attentive reader will have noticed from (25), not only time, but also space can be used as a measure in this construction. On our analysis, it is not necessary to posit another sense, extended off of the Span of Time sense to the domain of space (which would be theoretically interesting as metaphors are claimed to be unidirectional). This is in fact a case of metonymy wherein a distance stands for the time it takes to travel that distance, as in English 'We've been singing for thirty miles'.

### 3.6. Paragon

Another extension of the Central Deictic is used for the purpose of pointing something out because it is somehow distinct from other members of its category, often because this object is a paragon example of the group (Lakoff 1987). The Paragon Deictic exhibits the syntactic restriction of only accepting partitive NPs, either full or pronominalized using *en* 'some' (28).

(28)  (a)  *Voilà de la bonne littérature.*
           Now there's good literature.

      (b)  *En voilà des étudiants!*
           Now there's some students (for you)!

This construction uses the intonation pattern found in general with the expression of awe or paragon status (bolded in (29)), as exemplified in the other constructions expressing awe. Instrumental analysis shows that this intonational pattern corresponds to a Low to High pitch contour over the word *voilà*, with a quick drop onto the rest of the low pitch sentence.

(29)  (a)  ***Ça** c'est une bonne idée.*
           Now, **that's** a good idea.

      (b)  *Si **Marco** n'y va pas, eh ben, moi non plus.*
           If **Marco** isn't going, well then, me neither.

Partitive noun phrases are the only ones permitted in the Paragon *voilà* construction, which can be shown to derive once again from the pragmatics of this particular sense. The Paragon Deictic specifically picks out one member (or set of members) from a category. This is most aptly expressed syntactically with the partitive, which selects a part of a group. Coupled with the "pointing out" sense of the deictic, this construction yields a "pointing out" of the paragon members of a group, with appropriately limited syntax.

## 6. Conclusion

We have presented an analysis of a family of constructions, related through cognitive mechanisms (Goldberg 1995). Figure 1, below, is a graphical representation of this family. Including the possibility of pragmatic and semantic constraints having effects on the formal aspects of each of these constructions has provided motivation for the variation they show. Analyses that require words to be relegated to strict grammatical categories are unable to capture the range of variation that these items display.
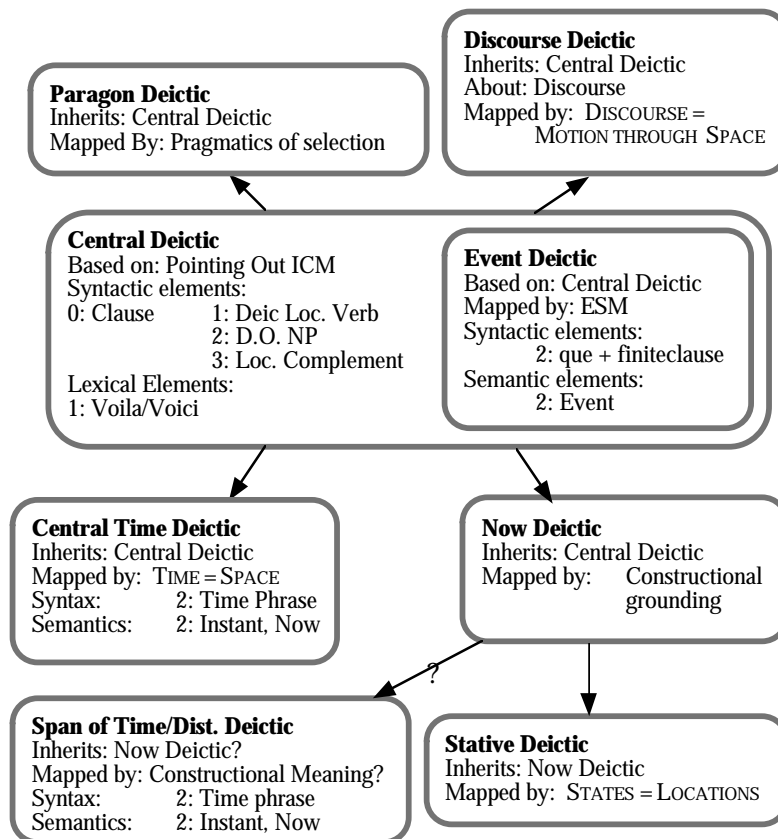
Figure 1: Radial category of *voilà* constructions

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