

TAKING DISCOURSE INTO ACCOUNT: THE LIMITS OF SUBSTITUTION RULES IN THE TREATMENT OF THE PRONOUN *EN*

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the teaching of *en* to non-native speakers of French. We show that the substitution rules generally listed in textbooks to teach this pronoun are problematic because they do not describe crucial facts. For instance, constituents introduced by *des* and *de* + bare noun expressions, very frequent in everyday French, are not covered. To solve the problem, we propose that the concept of reference be explained to the learner. More generally, we point out that substitution rules are limited because they only take into account morphological aspects but not the context/discourse, where reference is accessible.

Key words: French pronoun *en*, substitution rules, reference, *des* nominal, *de* + bare noun expression

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the French clitic pronoun *en* illustrated in (1), and on how it is presented in textbooks or grammars for French as a foreign language for Anglophones.

- (1) Jean vient *de Paris*. Il *en* vient.
'John comes from Paris. He comes from there.'

In example (1), *en* pronominalizes the phrase in bold *de Paris* 'from Paris'. More generally, this pronoun can replace constituents introduced by *de* in example (2) or following a number in example (3) or a quantity expression in example (4), respectively.

- (2) Jean a mangé *de la tarte*. Il *en* a mangé.
'John ate some tart. He ate some.'
- (3) Jean a acheté quatre *livres*. Il *en* a acheté quatre.
'John bought four books. He bought four.'

- (4) Jean a acheté beaucoup *de livres*. Il *en* a acheté beaucoup.
 ‘John bought many books. He bought many.’

Textbooks for English-speaking learners of French generally deal with the use of *en* as above, that is, they provide a list of contexts in which a noun, *de* + noun, or *de* + article + noun can be pronominalized by *en*. The various textbooks examined in this paper¹ propose to replace a given form with another one, *en*, in a very mechanical way. As *en* is a proform, i.e. a pronoun replacing a larger constituent, such a grammatical procedure is not surprising and makes sense, as it allows, for instance, the speaker to avoid repetition. However, we show in this paper that this approach is problematic because it does not describe crucial facts. In particular, we discuss two cases, very frequent in everyday French, which are not covered by the substitution rules found in textbooks: constituents introduced by *des* and *de* + bare noun (i.e. a noun without a determiner) expressions.

As we shall see, *des*-constituents cannot always be replaced by *en*, and when they can, two different interpretations may arise, depending on the context (the meaning can be indefinite or partitive). The difficulty with *de* + bare noun expressions is that when *en* is used, it must, in some cases but not always, co-occur with a number or a quantity expression. The substitution rules given to learners do not allow them to distinguish between these contexts.

We suggest that those issues can be dealt with if the general concept of reference is explained to the learner.² This implies taking into account the context and discourse in which *en* is used. More generally, we point out that substitution rules are insufficient because they only take into account morphological aspects but not the context and the discourse where reference is accessible.

The notion of reference can be explained in a simple way, without introducing complex theoretical ideas, as it primarily consists in using and relating notions that should be familiar to the learner, such as the use of determiners: the mass/count distinction, the part-whole relation (partitivity), and the difference between elements that have been introduced in the discourse (definite) and elements that have not (indefinite). Crucially, taking into consideration the concept of reference, and hence discourse, we are able not only to untangle the two interpretations of *en* in *des*-contexts but also to distinguish these two uses from additional contexts in which the definite pronoun replaces *des*-constituents. Moreover, this will allow us to account for the differences between the *de* + bare noun expressions mentioned above.

This article briefly addresses further issues regarding negative constructions and the difficulties the Anglophone learners face when using *en*, to the extent that *en* is sometimes not translated into English.

2. THE TEXTBOOKS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING LEARNERS OF FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The textbooks of French for English speakers that we examined are the following:

1. Valette and Valette (1989)

¹ These works are listed in the next section. The choice is arbitrary in that they have been selected because they are very familiar to one of the authors who has been teaching French as a foreign language for about 10 years. All of them are textbooks except for Olliver & Beaudoin (2008) which is a grammar. For convenience, we will use the term *textbook*.

² Reference should not be confused with referents in a (real or imaginary) world.

2. Thompson and Hirsch (2003)
3. Terrell et al. (2008)
4. Mitschke (2008)
5. Ollivier and Beaudoin (2008)
6. Oates and Dubois (2010)
7. Mitschke and Tano (2010)

To explain how *en* is used, these textbooks offer a list of forms that can be replaced by *en*. In other words, the general idea is that a form replaces another one. For instance, Oates and Dubois mention that *en* ‘takes the place of an object (noun or infinitive) preceded by some form of *de*’ (2010: 100), and Ollivier and Beaudoin that *en* replaces ‘*de, d’, du, de la, de l’, des*’ + a thing (2008: 82) (this would correspond to example (1) and (2)). Often, the contexts in which *en* occurs are listed in a more precise manner: most textbooks mention that the object of the preposition *de* can be replaced by *en* (Valette and Valette, 1989: 345, Mitschke, 2008: 175, Mitschke and Tano, 2010: 314), sometimes with a few conditions such as ‘if the noun object is a *thing* or a *place*’ (Thompson & Hirsch 2003: 188) or ‘the name of a thing’ (Terrell et al. 2008: 255). Other forms that are generally mentioned as elements replaceable by *en* are phrases introduced by the indefinite and the so-called partitive articles. Some textbooks list those articles separately (Terrell et al. 2008: 254): partitive article [*du, de la, de l’*], indefinite article [*un, une, des*]; others provide a single list (Valette and Valette 1989: 345 : *du, de la, de l’, des*) or no list at all (Thompson and Hirsch 2003: 188; Mitschke and Tano, 2010: 314-315). Oates and Dubois (2010: 100), Mitschke (2008: 175), and Ollivier and Beaudoin (2008: 82) mention partitives but not indefinites. The difference between *un/une* and *des* is not always explained (Terrell et al. 2008: 254-255): if the noun following the former is replaced by *en*, *un/une* is retained (see example (5)). *Des*, in contrast, is not repeated: it is included in the constituent replaced by *en* as illustrated in example (6).

- (5) Avez-vous un chien? Oui, j’*en* ai *un*.
‘Do you have a dog? Yes, I have one.’
- (6) Avez-vous des chiens? Oui, j’*en* ai. /*Oui, j’*en* ai des.

The distinction illustrated above is not always made explicit. Some authors, for example, simply treat *un* as a number (Oates and Dubois 2010: 100; Ollivier and Beaudoin 2008: 83). In other words, they assimilate the examples with *un/une* to another context in which *en* is frequently used, that is, constructions with numbers (recall example [3]). All the textbooks examined that discuss *en* with numbers also mention quantity expressions (*beaucoup de* ‘a lot of’, *peu de* ‘little/few of’ ...) (recall example [4]). Terrell et al. (2008: 254-255) and Ollivier and Beaudoin (2008: 82-83) do not mention explicitly that the number and the quantity expression used with *en* must be repeated, in contrast to Thompson and Hirsch (2003: 188), Mitschke (2008: 175), Oates and Dubois (2010: 100) and Mitschke and Tano (2010: 314). Finally, only two textbooks we examined list negative constructions in the contexts where *en* is found (Valette and Valette 1989: 345 (where the authors state that ‘*en* replaces DIRECT OBJECTS introduced by... the negative *de*’) and Mitschke (2008: 175) (where the author explains that ‘in a negative sentence, the number is not retained’). Consider example (7), which illustrates a negative sentence without a number:

- (7) Jean n'a pas *de chien*. Il n'*en* a pas.
'John doesn't have a dog. He doesn't have any.'

In summary, the above discussion shows is that all the textbooks we have studied establish a list of elements that can be replaced by *en*. This list can be formalized by the following substitution rules:

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| Constituents <i>introduced</i> by <u><i>de, du, de la, de l', des</i></u> | } | can be replaced by <i>en</i> |
| Constituents <i>preceded</i> by numbers and quantity expressions | | |

Although the substitution rules are clear and precise, they are problematic in some cases, as they do not cover all the facts. This is discussed below.

3. PROBLEMS FOR SUBSTITUTION RULES

Assuming that only substitution rules are needed to deal with the use of *en* is problematic for several reasons. Our discussion will concentrate on two issues. The first one concerns constituents introduced by *des* as in example (8), and the second one, expressions with *de* + bare noun (i.e. a noun without a determiner) as in example (9) and (10). Ultimately, we will see that both problems are related.

- (8) Jean a acheté *des livres*. Il *en* a acheté.
'John bought some books. He bought some.'
- (9) Combien *de viande* veux-tu ? J'*en* veux *un peu*. / *J'*en* veux. / *J'*en* veux *deux*.
'How much meat do you want? I want a little.'
- (10) Combien *de livres* veux-tu? *J'*en* veux *un peu*. / *J'*en* veux. / J'*en* veux *deux*.
'How many books do you want? I want two.'

Let us begin with examples containing a *des*-constituent, as in (8). According to substitution rule (a), a constituent introduced by *des* can be replaced by *en*. However, in some contexts, such constituents can be replaced by the definite pronoun *les* (which contrasts with Valette and Valette who write that 'the pronouns *le, la, les* are used to replace a direct-object noun introduced by a definite article, a demonstrative or a possessive adjective'). The following sequence illustrates the point:

- (11) Jean : J'ai vu *des biscuits* sur la table.
John: 'I saw some biscuits on the table.'
- (12) Marie : Oui, je *les* ai vus aussi.
Mary: 'Yes, I saw them too.'

The fact that an utterance like (12), with the pronoun *les*, is appropriate after John's remark in (11) does not mean that an example with *en* is ungrammatical, as (13) shows:

- (13) Marie : Oui, j'*en* ai vu aussi.
 Mary: 'Yes, I saw some too.'

The answer in both (12) and (13) is possible after utterance (11). However, none of the textbooks we looked at mentions this fact. Yet, for a learner of French to understand how to use *en*, s/he should be aware of these options and of the fact that examples (12) and (13) do not have the same meaning, as shown by the translations. In example (12), the pronoun *les* represents the biscuits seen by John, whereas in example (13) *en* represents some other biscuits. This difference is not trivial if we want to communicate efficiently, and can only be grasped if the discourse/context of utterance is taken into account.

For a learner of French to realize and understand the difference between the answer in (12) and in (13), the substitution rules mentioned above are not sufficient. Although they predict (13), they do not suggest the possibility of other options. In other words, a learner applying substitution rules will be unaware of the existing contrast between (12) and (13) and will therefore not be in a position to understand the difference between the two, and even less to determine to which interpretation *en* corresponds.

The issue is even more complex if we consider (14), followed by (15).

- (14) Jean : J'ai pris *des biscuits* qui étaient sur la table.
 John: 'I took some of the biscuits that were on the table.'

- (15) Marie : Oui, j'*en* ai pris aussi.
 Mary: 'Yes, I took some too.'

An utterance like (15), which contains *en*, differs from (13) in that it has a partitive meaning: *en* corresponds to *a part* of the biscuits mentioned by John (part-whole relation). Again, the difference between those contexts should be made explicit for a learner to understand how to use *en* correctly. Although in both (13) and (15) *en* replaces a constituent introduced by *des*, the difference in meaning between the two uses of *en* is not pointed out to the learner (at least not in the textbooks we listed).

The same meaning differences are found in examples using numbers. Consider the sentence in (16), and the replies to it reported in (17).

- (16) Jean : J'ai acheté *cinq pommes*.
 John: 'I have bought five apples.'
- (17) a. Marie : Oui, je *les* ai vues.
 Mary: 'Yes, I saw them.'
 b. Marie: Moi aussi, j'*en* ai acheté *cinq*.
 Mary : 'I also bought five.'
 c. Marie : J'ai remarqué. J'*en* ai mangé *deux*.
 Mary: 'I noticed that. I ate two of them.'

In example (17), *les* represents all the apples bought by John; in example (17b), *en* represents five other apples; and in example (17c), *en* represents a subset of the five apples bought by John. In contrast with constituents introduced by *des*, contexts such as those suggested by example (16) retain the number when *en* is used (see substitution rule *b* above).

Let us now turn to the second issue that is problematic for substitution rules, namely examples like (9) and (10). Crucially, the first part of these examples, i.e. the question, looks similar (*Combien de viande/de livres veux-tu?*). The answer, however, has to be different: in example (9), *J'en veux un peu* is fine, whereas *J'en veux deux* is not, hence the star. In contrast, in example (10), *J'en veux deux* is possible, whereas *J'en veux un peu* is not. In both cases, *J'en veux* is infelicitous. The learner should be able to rely on her/his textbook to provide the information necessary to answer correctly questions introduced by *combien*.

According to substitution rule *a*, *en* can replace the constituent introduced by *de* in the examples discussed above: in (9) it can pronominalize *de viande* 'of meat' and in (10) *de livres* 'of books'. However, this is too simple a rule, as such constructions require that an explicit quantity like *un peu* 'a little' or an explicit number like *deux* 'two' co-occur with *en*. As this constraint is not specified by substitution rules, it is difficult for the learner, on the basis of these rules, to produce appropriate replies like *J'en veux un peu* and *J'en veux deux* as in examples (9) and (10) respectively.

A first difficulty for a learner is therefore to understand that, in some contexts, it is not sufficient to replace a *de*-form by *en*. Additional material is required, i.e. a quantity or a number. This of course implies identifying such linguistic contexts. A second difficulty is to realize that examples like (9) and (10) differ from negative constructions illustrated in (7). Although in both cases *de* is followed by a bare noun, negative constructions do not require an overt quantity/number in order to be grammatical, in contrast to contexts found in (9) and (10). In other words, on the basis of substitution rules, it is impossible for learners to determine (i) if some additional material is required with *en* or not; and (ii) whether it is a number or a quantity expression that should be added to the sentence for it to be grammatical. A discussion and explanation of these issues would improve a teaching grammar.

In brief, substitution rules are limited in that they do not account for the data discussed above, which represent important aspects of French. For such examples to be described efficiently, either these rules should be refined, or another methodology should be put forward. In this paper, we take the second option. We propose to take some distance from substitution rules and to introduce broader concepts that will allow the learner to see that the data discussed above are interrelated, and to differentiate among the various interpretations presented.

4. ANALYSIS

So far we have seen that substitution rules do not cover crucial data involving *en*. The analysis we put forward suggests that substitution rules focus on morphological forms without taking into account essential information provided by the discourse.

As mentioned in our discussion of examples (12), (13) and (15), the pronouns in *je les ai vus aussi*, *j'en ai vu aussi* and *j'en ai pris aussi* have different interpretations. Our argument is that this can be explained in a simple way, without introducing complex theoretical notions. What we propose is that the key concept learners need to understand is *reference*, as this will enable them to differentiate the three contexts. Basically, this implies that learners should know

what the pronoun they use refers to, i.e. what it stands for: in (12), *les* stands for all the biscuits seen by John (and Mary); in (13) *en* stands for some biscuits that Mary saw but (and this is crucial) not the same biscuits as the ones John saw; and in (15) *en* stands for a sub-part of the biscuits mentioned by John. In other words, in the first case we are dealing with a *definite* reference – we refer to the whole set of biscuits already introduced in the discourse –; in the second case we are dealing with an *indefinite* reference – we refer to some biscuits that have not been mentioned –; and in the third case with part of a reference already mentioned, i.e. it is a *partitive* interpretation. The idea is that the definite reference represents a given set, that the indefinite one represents another set, whereas the partitive one represents part of a given set.

The same analysis applies to (16) and (17). In (17), *les* refers to the set of apples mentioned by John (i.e. all the 5 apples); in (17b), *en* relates to a different set of apples, that is, to apples not yet introduced in the discourse (i.e. there are 10 apples all together); and in (17c), *en* relates to a subpart of the five apples already mentioned. In other words, *en* is used when the reference is not definite (cf. Ihsane 2013: 18).

Introducing the notion of reference will allow the learner to distinguish between the different interpretations discussed above, and hence to choose the right pronoun, being aware of the different uses of those pronouns. As the concept of reference also applies to examples introduced by *du, de la, de l'*, which may be indefinite or partitive (parallel to examples [13] and [15] respectively), it covers all the forms that can be replaced by *en* mentioned in substitution rule *a*, except for *de* + bare noun. This is however not a problem as the latter, we claim, can be assimilated to constructions involving a number (recall example [3]) or a quantity expression (recall example [4]). The relevant examples are repeated below for convenience:

- (9) Combien *de viande* veux-tu? *J'en veux *un peu*. / *J'en veux. / *J'en veux *une*.
'How much meat do you want? I want a little.'
- (10) Combien *de livres* veux-tu? *J'en veux *un peu*. / *J'en veux. / J'en veux *deux*.
'How many books do you want? I want two.'

Both examples (9) and (10) include a question containing *combien* 'how much/how many'. However, they differ in that the answer to that question must include a quantity (*un peu* 'a little') and a number (*deux* 'two') respectively. As the translation of *combien* suggests, the distinction is due to the kind of noun following *de*: when it is a *mass* term (how much), a quantity is required, whereas when it is a *count* term (how many), a number is required. *Viande* 'meat' is mass, hence the appearance of *un peu* 'a little' in example (9); and *livres* 'books' is count, hence the presence of *deux* 'two' in example (10). This means that the contexts illustrated in (9) and (10) can be assimilated to other expressions with a number/quantity. The difference is that the number/quantity is not explicitly mentioned in the questions in (9) and (10). As a consequence, the learner of French has to deduce this element from the context, taking into account a crucial clue, the kind of noun that is used. This implies that the learner is aware of the mass/count contrast. Since this contrast boils down to whether we are dealing with individuated entities or not (count vs. mass nouns respectively), it means we need to know whether the reference of the

expressions we are interested in can be divided into entities or not³. This is how the issues related to examples (9) and (10) are linked to the first problem we discussed, namely the different uses of *des*-constituents.

The next question we need to address is whether the above discussion extends to *de* + bare noun in negative contexts like (7), repeated below as (18).

- (18) Jean n'a pas *de chien*. Il n'*en* a pas.
'John doesn't have a dog. He doesn't have one.'

Recall that such constructions differ from the *combien* contexts discussed in (9) and (9)(10) in that there is no number/quantity co-occurring with *en*. We propose that the *combien*-examples are in fact parallel to contexts with quantities like *beaucoup* 'many/much' or *peu* 'little/few', except that the quantity is not overtly expressed. This is illustrated below, in examples (19)-(21):

- (19) Jean a beaucoup *de livres*. Il *en* a beaucoup.
'John has many books. He has many.'
- (20) Jean a peu *de livres*. Il *en* a peu.
'John has few books. He has few.'
- (21) Jean n'a pas \emptyset *de livres*. Il n'*en* a pas \emptyset .
'John doesn't have any books. He doesn't have any.'

In the above examples, *en* replaces *de livres*. The quantities *beaucoup* and *peu* are repeated in the sentences containing *en*. The idea is that, in the same vein, \emptyset , a zero quantity, is present in the *en*-sentence but as it is not overtly expressed, the parallel needs to be made explicit for learners of French. What is interesting in examples (19)-(21) is that *beaucoup/peu/∅* are possible with both count (*livre* 'book') and mass terms (*beaucoup/peu/pas de lait* 'much/little/no milk'). The difference between *beaucoup/peu* and \emptyset is that the latter is restricted to negative contexts. That there is some quantity expressed in example (21) is supported by the English translation, which contains *any*, the negative counterpart of *some*. Making the similarity between (19), (20) and (21) explicit can only help the learner.

The discussion of examples (19)-(21) also supports what earlier suggestion that *en* is used when the reference is not definite (Ihsane 2013): *de livres* does not refer to some books introduced in the discourse. It simply specifies the relevant concept, i.e. books compared to magazines, for instance.

Therefore, *reference* is a key concept in the use of *en*, a conclusion further supported by agreement facts. Consider the examples below:

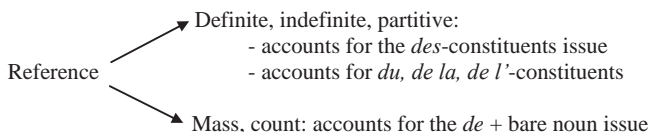
- (22) Jean a mis *des fourchettes* dans le tiroir. Marie *les* a prises puis remises dans le tiroir.
'John put some forks into the drawer. Mary took them and then put them back into the drawer.'

³ English and French seem to differ with regard to the concept mass/count: *du raisin* vs. *grapes*, *une information* vs. *a piece of information*, *un pain* vs. *a loaf of bread*, *un meuble* vs. *a piece of furniture*. Such examples are, however, restricted to specific words. In most cases, both languages are similar.

- (23) Jean a mis *des fourchettes* dans le tiroir. Marie *en* a mis / *mises aussi.
 ‘John put some forks into the drawer. Mary put some in there too.’

In (22), *les* represents the forks already introduced into the discourse, i.e. definite reference, and the past participle *mises* ‘put.FEM.PL’ agrees with that pronoun, as it is a direct object preceding the participle. By contrast, in (23), there is no agreement on the past participle *mis* ‘put’. This is not surprising as agreement only takes place with definite reference, and *en* cannot be used with definite reference, as shown above. In other words, the agreement facts reported in the above examples support the analysis we propose. Only one of the textbooks examined in this paper, namely Valette and Valette (1989), mentions that there is no agreement with *en* in the *passé composé*.

The main ideas put forward above can be summarized as follows:



The analysis proposed above differs from substitution rules in that it is not based on morphological forms but rather on information provided by the discourse. The introduction of the concept of reference in grammars or textbooks for learners of French is not a major concern since most learners of French should be familiar with the part-whole relation, the mass-count distinction and the concept of definiteness. Understanding those notions is necessary, for instance, to use determiners correctly. The textbooks could hence refer the reader back to the relevant units and/or use the discussion of *en* to show that these notions are related, precisely through the concept of reference. Some clarifications concerning the terminology might be necessary (reference vs. referent, definite reference [= reference introduced in the discourse] vs. indefinite reference). This can be integrated in the discussion of the examples with *des* or *de* + bare noun.

5. FURTHER ISSUES RELATED TO THE TEACHING OF *EN*

For teaching material on *en* to be efficient, some additional issues relevant to learners of French should be mentioned in textbooks. One of them is the position of this pronoun in the sentence, and another its pronunciation in some negative constructions. Further questions specifically concern Anglophone learners of French, as English does not always have an overt counterpart to *en*.

The position of *en* in the sentence is only mentioned in two of the textbooks we examined (Valette and Valette; Mitschke and Tano): *en*, like other clitic pronouns, immediately precedes the verb/auxiliary (cf. examples (19)-(23)). This means that in negative contexts *en* follows the negative particle *ne* (recall example (18)). In spoken French, however, the negative *ne* is generally omitted (24). As a result, the position of *en* is between the subject and the verb/auxiliary (25).

(24) Je les vois pas. (vs. Je ne les vois pas.)
'I don't see them.'

(25) J'en ai pas. (vs. Je n'en ai pas.)
'I don't have any.'

Examples like (25) lead to another observation: there is a liaison between *en* and *ai*. In other words, we hear an [n] between those words. This [n] should not be confused with the negative particle *ne* found in examples like (26).

(26) Je n'ai pas le temps.
'I don't have time.'

In example (26), the sequence [ne] results from the combination of the contracted *ne* (*n'*) and the first person singular form of *avoir* 'have', *ai*. On the other hand, in (25), the sequence [ne] after *en* is due to the liaison [n] + *ai* [e] (NOT: *J'en n'ai pas* 'I EN NE have not' which is impossible in French).

The issues mentioned above are relevant for any learner of French. In addition, some aspects of the use of *en* are particularly difficult for English speaking learners. The main problem is that in some examples *en* has a counterpart in English (*some/any*) (see examples (8) and (21)) whereas in others it does not (see examples (19) and (20)). These examples are repeated below for convenience:

(8) Jean a acheté des livres. Il *en* a acheté.
'John bought some books. He bought *some*.'

(21) Jean n'a pas de livres. Il n'*en* a pas.
'John doesn't have any books. He doesn't have *any*.'

(19) Jean a beaucoup de livres. Il *en* a *beaucoup*.
'John has many books. *He has many*.'

(20) Jean a peu de livres. Il *en* a *peu*.
'John has few books. *He has few*.'

Examples like (19) and (20) are particularly difficult for Anglophones, who often omit *en* in such contexts. This is shown in examples (27) and (28), which are actual productions, typical for English speaking learners. Both examples come from the work of one of the authors' Anglophone students.

(27) J'ai une. (intended: J'en ai une)
'I have one.'

(28) Je n'aime pas le fromage mais il y a eu un que j'ai aimé. (intended : ... il y en a eu un...)
'I don't like cheese, but there is one kind that I liked.'

The error illustrated above is due to the influence of English: the meaning conveyed by the French sentences is expressed in English without an element corresponding to *en*. Hence the importance of highlighting the difference between examples (8) and (21) on the one hand, and (19) and (20) on the other hand: in the latter, i.e. constructions with a number/quantity, *en* is required in French, *in addition to* the number/quantity.

Another fact to which Anglophones need to pay attention is that English *some* functions both as a determiner and as a pronoun. On the other hand, French uses two different items, *des* (determiner) and *en* (pronoun). The difficulty related to this point is that a *des*-phrase does not always correspond to *en*: recall that such a constituent can be pronominalized by a definite pronoun (see example (12)). Furthermore, *des* must occur with count nouns, by contrast to *some*, which is grammatical both with mass and count terms. This means that the determiner *some* does not always correspond to *des*, and therefore that the learner should be aware of the differences.

6. EXTENSION TO TESOL

So far, we showed that the substitution rules provided by textbooks designed for learners of French are limited. This is because these rules function like shortcuts, ignoring various aspects in the description of the facts.

What we have proposed is to move away from rules that focus on morphological forms, i.e. segments of sentences, and to take discourse into account. This dimension of meaning has to be considered in the description of the facts, and therefore made explicit to the learner in textbooks. The aim is not to describe *all* aspects related to *en*, but rather, for each level, to take into account the context in which *en* is used in order for the learner to have a better understanding of the facts. This can be achieved by raising the learner's awareness of broader concepts like reference.

Our analysis is based on the study of *en*. In particular, we have shown that the introduction of the concept of reference solves several problems not addressed by substitution rules. This implies taking into account the mass/count distinction, the part-whole (partitivity) relation, the difference between elements introduced in the discourse (definite) and elements not introduced in the discourse (indefinite).

Textbooks resorting to shortcuts can be found for the English language as well. For instance, grammars or textbooks for learners of English generally associate the presence of elements like *ever* to the use of the present perfect. However this is not always true as illustrated in (29).

(29) Did you ever meet him in the end?

In this example, *ever* is not used with the present perfect but with the simple past. This shows that a formalization like the one presented in (30) is not adequate, as it does not cover all the data.

(30) If *ever* → present perfect
then

Example (30) is analogous to the rules for *en* (even if there is no substitution) in that it tells the learner to look for a specific morphological form and then to apply a rule mechanically.

However, data as in (29) show that this is not sufficient. Broader concepts have to be introduced to understand when the present perfect is used (like time, tense, and aspect with respect to a discourse situation).

Another example from English demonstrating inappropriate shortcuts can be observed in textbooks' explanations of the use of *some/any*. Learners of English are told that *some* can only be used in affirmative sentences, and that *any* occurs in interrogative/negative contexts. However, this does not account for the examples below:

(31) Would you like some coffee?

(32) I don't like some pop music.

Although the first example is interrogative and the second one negative, *some* is grammatical in both cases. To understand why this is so, the learner needs to know that example (31) is a suggestion to which the speaker expects a positive reaction, and that example (32) is about some specific type of pop music. Even when context is taken into account in the rules provided by textbooks, some teachers prefer to stick to the contrast affirmative sentence vs. interrogative/negative sentence, i.e. to a shortcut. This has been noted in classroom observations on many occasions by one of the authors who has been a teacher trainer for many years, and shows that mechanical rules are more popular with teachers than an understanding of syntax integrating discourse. To account for the grammaticality of examples like (31) and (32), however, the context in which these sentences are uttered has to be considered. These observations support our conclusion that mechanical rules do not account for some crucial facts, and that the context in which an example/utterance is produced should be taken into account in textbooks.

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