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Soggetti	French language - Tense Language and linguistics Linguistics
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Note generali	This book discusses the features of the alleged disappearance and uses over time of the passe simple, while testing its vitality against contemporary corpora. Now evolving as a stylistic marker, that tense has not yet been superseded.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Contents -- Foreword -- Preface: Chronicle of a Death Foretold -- List of Figures and Tables -- Abbreviations -- Introduction -- 1 A Story Needs to Be in the Past Historic. Otherwise, Nobody Knows It's a Story ... -- 2 A Not So Simple Past ... -- 3 The Future of This Past ... -- 1 Language Evolution -- 1 Introduction -- 2 Stages of Language Evolution -- 3 Innovation -- 4 Propagation -- 5 Mechanisms for Language Evolution -- 6 Results of Language Change -- 7 Evolution in the Domain of the Past -- 8 A 'Dia-Model' of Evolution and Change -- 2 Once Upon a Time ... There Was the PS -- 1 From Latin to French -- 2 In Old French -- 3 In Middle French -- 4 In Classical French -- 5 In Modern French -- 6 Conclusions on the Diachronic Evolution of the PS -- 3 Favourable Factors for PS Use in Contemporary French -- 1 Age Grading (Personal Diachrony) -- 2 Geographical Variation (Diatopie) -- 3 Social Variation (Diastratie) -- 4 Gender Variation (Diagenie) -- 5 Variation according to the Medium (Diamesie) -- 6 Variation across the Context of Use (Diaphasie) -- 7 Cotextual Variation -- 8 Conclusion on the Diachronic Evolution of PS -- 4 The Not So Simple PS -- 1 Previous Descriptions of the PS -- 2 Defining the Specific Profile of the PS -- 3

Conclusion -- 5 Substitutes for PS in Contemporary French -- 1 The Past Connection -- 2 Going Global -- 3 Looking Forward -- 4 Conclusion -- 6 Methodology for the Corpus Analysis -- 1 Introduction -- 2 Methodology -- 3 Corpus -- 4 Opening -- 7 The PS across Modes in Contemporary French -- 1 Modes of Speech (Conversing) -- 2 Modes of Speech (Monologuing) -- 3 Modes of Speech (Reciting): Neo-contes -- 4 Modes of Speech (Speaking of What Is Written) -- 5 Modes of Writing -- 6 The Actual Use of the PS across Modes -- 8 The PS in Micro-Diachrony -- 1 Presentation of the Corpus -- 2 Corpus Le Monde -- 3 Corpus L'Humanite -- 4 Corpus Le Soir -- 5 Corpus La Libre Belgique -- 6 Conclusions on Sports Reports in Micro-Diachrony -- 9 Conclusions -- 1 Chronicle of a Death Foretold -- 2 Some Hundred Years of Decrepitude? -- 3 Living to Tell the Tale -- 4 On the Day They Were Going to Kill It? -- References.

Sommario/riassunto

The disappearance of the French simple past has been hotly debated since the early 20th century. This volume offers an overview of its fortunes since French emerged as a language, provides a description of its distinctive features, and discusses the potential impact of its supposed demise on the whole French verb system. These assumptions are tested against a large corpus of contemporary texts. The study concludes that, despite the erosion of its meaning and its increasingly infrequent use, the simple past tense is still used by native speakers in various contexts, and no single substitute has yet emerged. Nevertheless, the simple past may be evolving into a stylistic marker, making it fertile ground for future cross-linguistic studies.
