

Pour une systématisation du pronom *ce* devant la copule *être* en opposition aux pronoms *il* impersonnel et *il* personnel

In defence of a systematization of the French pronoun *ce* before the copula *être*, in opposition to the impersonal or third-person pronoun *il*

Jean-Pierre Seghi

Abstract: Our study, which falls within the field of teaching French as a foreign language, is inspired by two seemingly contradictory observations. The first concerns a recurrent error of Italian learners, who use the third-person personal pronoun, where only *ce* is accepted: *Un enfant s'est arrêté sous les réverbères. *Il est un garçon d'une dizaine d'années.* The second observation concerns the apparently paradoxical use of *il*, where we would expect *ce*: *Né en 1948, Philippe Grimbert est psychanalyste. Il est aussi l'auteur de romans dont « Un secret » qui a été récompensé par le Prix Goncourt.*

In our article, we propose to find a meaning for this contradiction. We shall explain why the pronoun *ce* is necessary in the first case. We will explain why *il* is on the contrary permitted in the second case.

This will lead us to define the pronoun *ce*, in opposition to *il* as a third-person personal pronoun, on the one hand, and in opposition to *il* as an impersonal pronoun, on the other, and to propose the system underlying the use of all three pronouns before *être*.

Key words: *ce*, impersonal pronoun *il*, third-person personal pronoun *il*, raw substance, semantic independence, externalization, internalization.