

French *ce*: An Anti-logophoric Demonstrative

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1 Background

- French as a demonstrative, *ce*, which can combine with an NP, pretty much like *this/that* does (there is only one demonstrative, not marked for distance; the suffixes *-ci* and *-là* are used to mark the distal/proximal distinction):

- (1) *ce livre*
this book
- (2) *cet homme*
this man
- (3) *ce livre-ci*
this book-PROX
- (4) *cet homme-là*
this man-DIST

- In the absence of an (overt) NP, the form *ça* is used:

- (5) *Regarde ça !*
look this
'*Look at this!*'
- (6) *Ça a l'air bon.*
this has the-air good
'*This looks good.*'

If it is, qua DP, the subject of a **copular** sentence, and only then, the form *ce* is also possible (preferred?):

- (7) *Ce n'est pas vrai.*
this NEG-is NEG true
'*This is not true.*'

- (8) ?Ça n'est pas vrai.
 this NEG-is NEG true
 'This is not true.'
- (9) C'est vrai.
 this-is true
 'This is true.'
- (10) *Ce/Ça est vrai.

In copular sentences, it's hard to see the vowel (*ce* vs. *ça*), because of elision due to the vowel in the copula (I use a negation, I could also have put the copula in the future).

I believe that *ce* is the same as *ça*, because in raising-to-subject one turns into the other (maybe *ce* is a clitic?):

- (11) Çà/ *Ce semble être vrai.
 this this seems be true
 'This seems to be true.'

☞ I'm going to be interested in DP *ce* (with no NP) in **copular** sentences (I use *ce* as a blanket term).

1. First puzzle: The demonstrative *ce* can be used to **seemingly refer to animates**; in all the above examples, it was used as a **neuter** pronoun;
2. Second puzzle: It is an **anti-logophor**.

2 DP-restriction and anti-referentiality

The neuter demonstrative *ce* can be used as a pre-copular element, together with a post-copular DP (a (in)definite description), to describe a thing or a person:

- (12) CE copula DP
 (13) *Speaking of Pierre...*

C'est un écrivain.

CE-is a writer

'He's a writer.'

- (14) *Speaking of Pierre...*
C'est le meilleur écrivain.
CE-is the best writer
'He's the best writer.'

- (15) *Speaking of this store...*
C'est une épicerie.
CE-is a grocery-store
'It's a grocery store.'

Compare with English:

- (16) *Speaking of Pierre...* #This/#That/#It is a writer.
(17) This/That is Pierre. [Identificational]

In French, the demonstrative **doesn't seem** to be marked for animacy, as it can be anteceded by (or 'refer to') an animate (13) or an inanimate (15).

Importantly, **only a DP** (vs. an AP or a bare NP), can be used in this frame:

- (18) *Speaking of Pierre...*
a. #C'est poli.
CE-is polite
b. #C'est écrivain.
CE-is writer
(19) *Speaking of this car...*
#C'est rapide.
CE-is fast

A natural hypothesis about (13)-(15), in view of their difference with (18)-(19), is that they are or can be **specificational** sentences, i.e. statements of identity between two DP denotations (Higgins 1979).

Unquestionably, (18)-(19) are (failed) **predicational** copular sentences.

(20)	The culprit is Marie. e ... copula ... e	[Specificational]
(21)	The culprit is French. e ... copula ... $\langle e, t \rangle$	[Predicational]
(22)	The culprit is a man.	[Ambiguous]

But can the denotation of *ce* in (13)-(15) be of just any of the types available to DPs?

From the deviance of the strictly predicational structures in (18)-(19), where the post-copular elements have denotations of type $\langle e, t \rangle$, we can conclude that *ce* is subject to an **anti-referentiality** constraint, i.e. it **cannot have antecedents of type *e*** (or refer to entities).

In fact, one can show that it can be anaphoric to antecedents of type *v* or *s*, e.g. activities, states or situations:

- (23) *Speaking of (i) dance, (ii) justice, (iii) my red purse with my orange dress...*
 C'est (i) intéressant (ii) nécessaire (iii) joli.
 CE-is interesting necessary pretty

- A possible explanation for 'anti-referentiality':

When a pronoun is to be used anaphorically or deictically, the forms *il/elle* trump the less specified *ce*: they are specified in the rather odd sense that they carry information about **grammatical gender**: if I want to refer to the table (feminine in French) the default is to use a feminine pronoun (*elle*), whose gender matches the gender of the unspoken noun that could be used to describe the table.

Maybe the availability of *ce* for situations comes from lack of a specific noun.

Maybe this is why *ce* is good when used as a deictic (5)-(6) (to me it is good inasmuch as there is no salient noun to refer to the thing).

This competition story doesn't quite work for abstract nouns, e.g. *danse*.

3 Inanimacy and anti-logophoricity

If *ce* cannot 'refer' to entities, then what is its denotation in (13)-(15) (where it seems to be anteceded by *Pierre/ce magasin*)?

And are these sentences necessarily specificational?

- The following setup, with a relative clause modifying the post-copular DP of sentences like (13)-(15), is designed to answer these questions:

(24) $\underbrace{\text{CE copula DP}}_{=(13)/(15)}, \text{ which } \underbrace{\text{CE copula } t \dots}_{\text{Predicational copular sentence}}$

In this frame, *ce* appears twice as the subject of a copular sentence and it is intended to 'refer' to the same thing in both cases.

The second occurrence is in an appositive relative clause, in order to ensure that the second copula is **predicative**, as relativization of the post-copular phrase is known (at least since Longobardi 1985) to only be licit in predicational sentences:

(25) *You should talk to Beverly, who the best pie-maker around here is.
(Mikkelsen 2004)

Let's flesh out the template in (24) (*ce* in *ce que* is irrelevant):

(26) *Speaking of this store...*
a. C'est une épicerie, ce que c'est depuis toujours.
CE-is a grocery-store which CE-is since always
'[This shop] is a grocery store, which it has always been.'

- b. C'est une épicerie, ce qu'elle est depuis toujours.
- (27) *Speaking of Pierre/the director...*
- a. #C'est un écrivain, ce que c'est depuis toujours.
 CE-is a writer which CE-is since always
 Intended: [*Pierre/The director*] is a writer, which he has always been.'
 Inference triggered: Pierre/the director is inanimate.
- b. C'est un écrivain, ce qu'il est depuis toujours.

☞ **Inanimacy inference:** In (26) and (27), I observe that the 'referent' of *ce* has to be **inanimate** (which leads to deviance in the latter).

Similarly in questions:

- (28) *Speaking of Pierre...*
- a. #Qu'est-ce ?
 what-is-CE
- b. Qu'est-il ?
 what-is-CE
- (29) a. A: Qu'est la capitale de la France ?
 what-is the capital of the France
- b. B: #Paris / Belle
 Paris beautiful

We know that the *ce* in the relative cannot have an extension of type *e* (cf. (18)-(19)), therefore I submit that its extension is an **individual concept** $\langle\langle s, e \rangle\rangle$, which serves as the argument of a predicate of type $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t \rangle$ (we know that this is a **predicational** copular sentence, due to relativization).

Furthermore, an **inanimacy presupposition** is attached to this extension of *ce* and to any extension of it that fits a **predicational** frame. The type $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t \rangle$ must also be the type of the matrix DP, by virtue of relativization.

Here's an analysis of (27):

- (30) CE est un écrivain $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t \rangle$, ce que $\underbrace{\text{CE}_{\langle s, e \rangle} \text{ est } t_{\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t \rangle} \dots}_{\text{Predicational copular sentence}}$

- From this we can draw the following conclusions about (13), which has an animate 'referent':

- It is not predicational, otherwise an inanimacy presupposition would be triggered, so it is an identity statement (hence the term ‘**identity-ce sentence**’);
- In (13), the post-copular DP can be $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t\rangle$ (a ‘sort’). If it has to be $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t\rangle$, then we could explain why a nominal must occupy the post-copular position, assuming that only nominals can denote sets of individual concepts (but this doesn’t explain the ban on bare NPs (18b));

[[ce]] is of the same $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t\rangle$ type (thus not an individual concept, contra Moltmann 2010):

‘ $CE_{\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t\rangle}$ est un écrivain $_{\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t\rangle}$.’

Regarding (15), the facts are compatible with an ambiguity between a predicational (with an inanimacy inference) and a specificational construal.

- An additional restriction bears on *ce* in (13), namely **anti-logophoricity**.

As with epithets, e.g. *the bastard*, disjoint reference effects obtain between a logophoric SOURCE or SELF and pre-copular *ce*:

C-command is not required to cause the effect, and it is also not sufficient, as the effect is obviated in relative clauses or under *convaincre* ‘convince’, where the logophoric center is the object of the attitude verb (see Patel-Grosz 2012 on the distribution of epithets):

- (31) Pierre_i/ [Chaque candidat]_i pense que c’_{#i,j} est un génie.
 Pierre/ each candidate thinks that CE is a genius
 ‘Pierre_i/Each candidate_i thinks that he_{#i,j} is a genius.’
- (32) Pierre_i/ [Chaque candidat]_i a convaincu Marie que c’_{i,j} est un génie.
 Pierre/ each candidate has convinced Marie that CE is a génie.
 genius
 ‘Pierre_i/Each candidate_i convinced Marie that he_{i,j} is a genius.’

- We can discard a possible analysis of (13) in terms of truncated clefts (after all, *ce* is used in clefts): no anti-logophoricity effect arises in clefts:

- (33) Pierre_i/ [Chaque candidat]_i pense que c’est un génie qu’ il_i est.
 Pierre/ each candidate thinks that it-is a genius that he is

- The post-copular DPs in ‘identity-*ce*’ sentences (13) should denote sorts, i.e. sets of individual concepts (these DPs aren’t necessarily ‘quiddity predicates’ as in Heller&Wolter 2008, as the strong identity condition attached to these does not apply).

Given identity, $\langle\langle s, e \rangle, t \rangle$ is also the type of $\llbracket ce \rrbracket$ in (13).

Quantifier binding (32) suggests the presence of a null pronoun which serves as argument to the demonstrative.

This pronoun denotes what Elbourne (2008) calls the *index*, i.e. the contextually salient entity which is the object of the deixis (Elbourne’s system is not fully adequate to the French facts, because it makes no distinction of type between DPs and non-nominal predicates).

I propose the following entry (34) for *ce* in ‘identity-*ce*’ sentences (another entry, not shown here, is necessary for the cases where $\llbracket ce \rrbracket$ is $\langle s, e \rangle$; *ce* then combines with a silent THING, hence the inanimacy inference (second occurrence in (27)):

- (34) $\llbracket ce \rrbracket^{w,t,g} = \lambda y_e. \lambda S_{\langle\langle se, t \rangle, t \rangle}. \lambda x_e. \iota f_{\langle se, t \rangle} [S(f)=T \ \& \ f(\lambda w'_s. y)=T \ \text{in } w \ \& \ \text{distal}(x, y, w, t)=T]$
- (35) $\llbracket \llbracket \llbracket CE \ i_2 \rrbracket \text{ SORT} \rrbracket \text{ pro}_3 \rrbracket \text{ est un \acute{e}crivain} \rrbracket^{w,t,g} \rightsquigarrow \text{The sort that Pierre is is writer}$

The value of i_2 is what the demonstrative points at, the *index*, e.g. Pierre (for simplicity, a relation argument, present in Elbourne 2008, is suppressed); this pronoun can be bound by a quantifier; SORT is a $\langle\langle se, t \rangle, t \rangle$ constant (the set of all sorts); the third argument is an individual variable (not part of Elbourne’s analysis of English demonstratives), which ends up being bound to the speaker, or the subject of an attitude predicate: this is the pronoun which, following Percus&Sauerland 2003, is identified with the matrix subject’s belief self in a *De Se* LF.

Anti-logophoricity results from the preference for a *De Se* construal (*Prefer De Se!*, Schlenker 2005), combined with the distance component: the distance feature of demonstratives is evaluated w.r.t. a center, which **can be an attitude subject** (Elbourne 2008 p. 432):

- (36) a. Mary talked to no senator without declaring afterwards that that senator (?this senator) was the one who would cosponsor her bill.
 b. Mary talked to no senator without thinking at the time afterwards that this senator (?that senator) was the one who would cosponsor her bill.

It is actually immaterial whether we choose DISTAL or PROXIMAL (the features Elbourne uses to distinguish *this* and *that*), as long as there is some distance between the *index* (y) and the individual that the subject identifies with (x) (as required by ‘ $\text{distal}(x, y, w, t)$ ’). Assuming that distance entails non-identity, we get a contradiction when the *index* is set to be the subject of an attitude, in a *De Se* LF (remember the preference for *De Se*): anti-logophoricity ensues (31).

- **Question:** What about names and pronouns in post-copular position?

- (37) *Speaking of the best actor...*
 C’est lui/ Pierre
 CE-is him Pierre
 ‘It’s him/ Pierre.’

It seems like *ce* behaves like *it*: it is anteceded by an expression denoting an individual concept. But then why no inanimacy inference?

Notice that in questions (which supposedly force a predicational construal), there is a contrast between *que* ‘what’ and *qui* ‘who’:

- (38) *Speaking of Pierre...*
 a. #Qu’est-ce ?
 what-is-CE
 b. Qui est-ce ?
 who is-CE

- **N.B.:** No anti-logophoricity in (39), because *ce* is anteceded by *le meilleur acteur* (dislocation):

- (39) Pierre_i pense que c’est lui_{i,j} le meilleur acteur.
 Pierre thinks that CE-is him the best actor

(40) Pierre_i pense que c'_{#i}est le meilleur acteur.
Pierre thinks that CE-is the best actor

- **Question:** Why is there no *ce* in English (it looks like there is one in German)?

(41) *Speaking of Pierre...*
#This/#That/#It is a writer.
#This/#That/#It was the best writer of his generation.