Agreement, case and locality in the nominal and verbal domains

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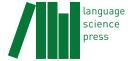
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Chapter 1

INSERT TITLE

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It has long been recognized that sentences with passive se obey a Person constraint: the subject cannot be 1st or 2nd person. I discuss a further constraint on the subject, manifest in Romanian: not only 1st or 2nd person pronouns, but all those DPs that must be marked by the prepositional object marker accompanied by clitic-doubling when functioning as direct objects are excluded from being subjects of se-passives. Following **Richards2008**, I propose that these DPs, which are high on the Person/Animacy scale, have a Person feature (manifested by clitic-doubling when they are case-licensed by v*), whereas those that can occur as subjects of se-passives lack the Person feature completely. The ban on +Person internal arguments in se-passives is due to the intervention of the Person feature associated with the external argument. I argue that the element saturating the external argument is differently projected in se-passives vs. participial passives, which explains the lack of an intervention effect in the latter case.

1 Introduction

As is well-known (**Belletti1982**; **Burzio1986**; **Manzini1986**; **Cinque1988**; Dobrovie-**Sorin1998**; 2006; D'**Alessandro2007**, a.o.), across the Romance domain there are two types of 'impersonal' constructions based on the reflexive clitic *se*: a passive construction, where the verb agrees with the internal argument (IA) and accusative cannot be assigned, and a bona fide impersonal, where *se* behaves as a subject clitic, like the counterpart of French *on* or German *man*. Whereas the passive construction is found in all Romance languages, the subject clitic *se* is only found in Italian and Ibero-Romance.

It has long been recognized that sentences with passive *se* obey a Person constraint: the IA cannot be 1st or 2nd person (**Burzio1986**; **Cinque1988**; **Cornilescu1998**;

D'**Alessandro2007**; **Mendikoetxea2008**; **Rezac2011**; Mac**Donald2017**, a.o.). **Cornilescu1998** noticed that certain 3$^{\text{rd}}$ person subjects are also excluded. I will argue that all these cases can be subsumed under a Person constraint of the following form:

(1)   DPs that bear [Person] are banned as IAs of *se*-passives

After providing background on Romanian *se*-passives (§2) and arguing for the constraint in (1) (§3), I will derive this constraint from the configurational proper-ties of *se*-passives (§4-5), comparing them with participial passives, where no Per-son constraint is found: as *se*-passives lack a dedicated passivizing morpheme, un-like participial passives, the External argument (EA) is bound by a null pronom-inal marked +Person; this element blocks Person agreement between T and IA, leading to the failure of nominative licensing for those DPs that bear Person. The background assumption is that in order to be case-licensed, a DP must match in all of its φ-features with the case licensor (**Chomsky2000**; 2001).

2 Passive *se* in Romanian

Like other Romance languages, Romanian, in addition to passives based on the 'past'/'passive' participle, has a passive based on the reflexive clitic *se* (a marker also used for anticausatives, inherent reflexives, and middles). The following sen-tences exemplify this type, with the usual tests for a passive reading – agent-oriented adverbials (ex. (2a)), purpose clauses with control by the EA (ex. (2b)), and *by*-phrases (ex. (2c-d)).

(2)   (*Regulamentul Camerei Deputaţilor*, II, 4,
       http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=235)

   a. Asta s-a   făcut deliberat.
       this SE-has done deliberately

       'This has been done deliberately.'

   b. Aceste haine   se vând pentru a ajuta săracii.
       these   clothes SE sell   for   to help poor-the

       'These clothes are sold to help the poor.'

   c. S-au   adus   mai   multe   îmbunătăţiri de   către
       SE-have.3PL brought several improvements by   experts
       specialişti.

       'A number of improvements have been brought by experts.'

    d. Convocarea   Camerei   Deputaților   se face de
       convocation-the chamber-the.GEN deputies-the.GEN SE does by
       către   președintele acesteia.
       president-the this(F).GEN
       'The summons of the Chamber of Deputies is done by its president.'

Regarding *by*-phrases, it should be noted that the complex preposition *de către* (< *de* 'of, from' + *către* 'towards') is specialized for demoted EAs, being found only in passives and eventive nominalizations.

Romanian also uses *se* to demote the EA of intransitive verbs – the so-called 'impersonal *se*' – see (3), where I also show that the participial passive cannot be used in this case:

(3)   {Se vorbește / *Este   vorbit} prea tare în   această cameră.
     SE speaks   is spoken too   loud in   this room
     'People speak too loud in this room.'

As shown by Dobrovie-**Sorin1998**, the impersonal *se* of Romanian is an instance of passive *se*. I will summarize her arguments below.

The label 'impersonal *se*' covers two types in Romance (cf. **Belletti1982**, **Manzini1986**, **Burzio1986** for Italian, Dobrovie-**Sorin1998**, 2006, 2017): (i) passivizing / 'accusative' *se*, found in all languages; (ii) an active impersonal construction, labelled 'nominative' *se* by Dobrovie-Sorin, found in Italian and Ibero-Romance, but not in Romanian or French.[1]

Let us now look at the evidence that Romanian only has the type in (i), unlike Italian or Spanish. First, nominative *se* can occur in transitive configurations, manifested by lack of agreement between the verb and the IA (4a) and accusative marking on the IA (5a, 6a); in Romanian, the verb must agree with the IA (4b) and accusative on the IA is not allowed (5b, 6b):

(4)   a. Italian (Dobrovie-**Sorin2017**: ex. (31c))
       In questa università si insegna le   materie   letterarie.
       in this   university SE teaches the humanities
       'Humanities are taught in this university.'

---

[1]For Italian, **Cinque1988** treats the two types as two varieties of nominative *si*, a [+arg] one that absorbs the external [F071?][F02D?]role and blocks accusative assignment (hence the 'passivizing' effect), and a [-arg] one, allowed with unaccusative and raising verbs; Dobrovie-**Sorin1998** argues that only Cinque's [-arg] *si* bears nominative.

b. Romanian (ibid.: ex. (32c))
În această universitate se predau /*predă ştiinţele umane.
in this university SE teach.3PL/ teaches sciences-the human

(5) a. Italian (ibid.: ex. (31d))
(Le materie letterarie) le si insegna in questa
(the humanities) CL.3FPL.ACC SE teaches in this university
università.

'(The humanities,) one teaches them in this university.'

b. * Romanian (ibid.: ex. (32d))
(*Ştiinţele umane) le se predă /
(the humanities) CL.3FPL.ACC SE teaches/ SE CL.3FPL.ACC
se le predă în această universitate.
teaches in this university

(6) a. Spanish (Dobrovie-**Sorin2017**: ex. (33)) En esta escuela se castiga
in this school SE punishes

a los alumnos.
DOM the students

'In this school they punish the students.'

b. * Romanian (ibid.: ex. (34)) În şcoala asta se pedepseşte pe
in school-the this SE punishes DOM

elevi.
students

Secondly, nominative *se* can occur in copular constructions, including copular passives. Romanian impersonal *se* is excluded from these environments:

(7) a. Italian (Dobrovie-**Sorin2017**: ex. (31a))
Non si è mai contenti.
not SE is ever satisfied.MPL

'One is never satisfied.'

b. * Romanian (ibid.: ex. (32a))
Nu se este niciodată mulţumit / mulţumiţi.
not SE is never satisfied.MSG/MPL

(8) a. Italian (Dobrovie-**Sorin2017**: ex. (31b))

Spesso   si è traditi dai   falsi amici.
frequently SE is betrayed by-the false friends

'One is frequently betrayed by false friends.'

b. * Romanian (ibid.: ex. (32b)) Adesea   se este trădat   de prieteni
frequently SE is   betrayed by false

falşi.
friends

This property indicates that Romanian impersonal *se* involves an operation on the argument structure of the verb, acting as a Voice marker. As copular verbs do not have arguments of their own, but combine with a small clause (they are raising verbs), the Voice marker *se* cannot apply to such verbs.

Thirdly, nominative *se* behaves like standard subjects with respect to control into complement clauses (see (9a)). Romanian disallows this type of control:

(9) a. Spanish (Dobrovie-**Sorin2017**: ex. (8a))
En ciertos estudios basados en fenómenos lingüísticos, se ha
in certain essays   based   on linguistic   phenomena, SE has
intentado reformar   la historia política y   social.
tried   reconstruct.INF the history political and social

'In certain studies based on linguistic phenomena, one has tried to reconstruct the political and social history.'

b. * Romanian (ibid.: ex. (90a))[2]
În unele studii s-a   încercat a reface,   pe   baza
in certain essays SE-has tried   to reconstruct based-on some
unor   fenomene lingvistice, istoria   politică şi   socială.
phenomena linguistic history-the political and   social

Further evidence for unifying passive and impersonal *se* in Romanian comes from *by*-phrases: intransitive verbs with impersonal *se* do sometimes allow *by*-

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[2]Note that this example becomes grammatical if *se* occurs on the lower verb too:

i. (..)   s-a încercat a se   reface (…)
SE-has tried to   SE reconstruct

If the EA in *se*-passives is projected as a PRO$_{arb}$, as proposed in §4-5 below, one may analyze the double use of *se* as reflecting agreement in 'impersonality' between PRO$_{arb}$ in the matrix and the controlled PRO; on a movement theory of control (see **Hornstein1999**), this example can be analyzed as involving movement of PRO$_{arb}$ between positions characterized by the same Voice configuration, marked by *se* (see §6). In Spanish and Italian, *se* is not a voice marker, but a nominative clitic, representing the EA itself, therefore it does not appear on both verbs.

phrases (on condition that the verb is agentive). Here are some examples attested on the Internet:

(10)   a.   (http://www.verticalonline.ro/autoritatile-comuniste-si-
reorganizarea-comunelor-in-1968-i)
Să
sbjv not forget.1pl that at this moment
nu   uităm că
se speaks by authorities about a new   reorganization
la   acest moment *se vorbeşte de către* autorităţi
administrative-territorial
de o nouă reorganizare administrativ-teritorială.

'Let's not forget that at this moment the authorities are talking about a new administrative and territorial reorganization.'

b.   (www.primariatantareni.ro/images/stories/ziar_ianuarie.pdf)
Modul   în care   este primit   sau i
manner-the in which is   received(m) or   3sg.dat se
se vorbeşte de către anumiţi salariaţi   …
speaks   by   employees certain employees
'The manner in which certain employees receive him or talk to him…'

A potential problem for the unification of passive and impersonal *se* in Romanian comes from the fact that impersonal *se* is allowed with verbs typically considered to be unaccusative:

(11)   a.   De la   această boală se   moare.
from this disease se   dies
'People die from this disease.'
b.   Nu se vine   îmbrăcat aşa la lucru.
not se comes dressed   so to work
'One does not come to work dressed like that.'

There are two possible ways of handling this problem. One is to assume that intransitive verbs such as *cădea* 'fall', *veni* 'come', and *muri* 'die' are not necessarily unaccusative in Romanian, but may project an EA, which can be demoted by passivization (see Dobrovie-**Sorin1987**, 1994), a view that is supported by the fact that the unaccusativity diagnostics are not very strong in Romanian – there is

no auxiliary alternation and no *ne/en*-cliticization; resultative participles are the clearest test, but they may represent a formation dependent on the verb meaning (change of state) and not on the way its arguments are projected. Note, furthermore, that even a handful of transitive and unergative verbs can be used to build resultative participles: *nemâncat* 'un-eaten' = 'who hasn't eaten', *nedormit* 'unslept' = 'who hasn't slept', *nebăut* 'un-drunk' = 'who hasn't drunk'. Note also that in a system of argument structure such as Ramchand's (2008), where a single argument can occupy more than one thematic position, realizing a composite role (e.g. Initiator + Undergoer, Undergoer + Resultee), we may assume that the subject of verbs such as *cădea* 'fall', *veni* 'come', and *muri* 'die' moves from an IA-position to SpecvP (or SpecInitP, in Ramchand's terminology), which is the position targeted by demotion.

The other potential solution is to allow demotion to apply to the IA for those verbs that do not project an EA-thematic layer (vP). **Bruening2012**, discussing passives of unaccusatives in Lithuanian and other languages, proposes that the passivizing head may select not only a VoiceP (= vP in Chomsky's 1995, 2000 terminology) with an unsaturated selectional feature, but also a VP with an unsaturated selectional feature. In order to exclude demotion of arguments other than the deep object (e.g. PPs, oblique cases), this unsaturated feature must somehow be further specified – Bruening describes this as selection for +N (written [S:N]). If we consider oblique and PP complements to involve different specifications for this feature, Bruening's procedure successfully accounts for the restriction of demotion to deep objects.

I do not intend to decide here between these two possible solutions. I would simply like to stress again that the demoted subject must be an argument of the V – see the exclusion of raising verbs such as *părea* 'seem' in (12) and the copula in (7b) and (8b) above – which clearly indicates that *se*-impersonals represent a Voice-type phenomenon (an operation on the argument structure of the V).

(12)   * În această oglindă se pare   tânăr
         in this   mirror SE seems young

         Intended meaning: 'People look young in this mirror'

The fact that *se*-impersonals of seemingly unaccusative verbs represent the same passive construction as with unergatives is demonstrated by the fact that *by*-phrases are permitted:

(13)   www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/...

> proiectul   de acord   la care
> project-the of agreement to which
> *s-a ajuns de către* cele 47 de state membre ale Consiliului Europei
> SE-has   arrived   by the
>
> 47 states member GEN Council-the.GEN Europe-the.GEN

Only verbs that are lexically marked by *se* – inchoatives, inherent reflexives – do not allow an impersonal *se*-construction – thus, (14a) does not have an impersonal reading; moreover, two co-occurring *se*'s as in (14b) are excluded:

(14) a. Se sperie   de întuneric / Se grăbeşte
          SE frightens of darkness SE   hurries

  = 'He/she is frightened by darkness. / He/she hurries.'
  ≠ 'People are frightened by darkness. / People hurry.'

  b. * *Se   se   sperie / grăbeşte
        SE SE frightens hurries

  Intended meaning: 'People are frightened by darkness. / People hurry.'

Depending on the general analysis of *se*-verbs, this may be explained either as a morphological ban on co-occurring *se*'s, or as the result of the fact that there is a single *se* marker, which, depending on other properties of the configuration in which it is inserted, yields the inchoative, reflexive or passive reading (see §6 on further suggestions).

To conclude, *se*-impersonals in Romanian belong to the general class of *se*-passives, which are based on the demotion of the 'subject' (EA, + deep object of unaccusatives). Unlike participial passives, *se*-passives do not require the existence of an IA (see (3) above and (15)):

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