

# Agreement, case and locality in the nominal and verbal domains

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# Contents

<b>1 On the Person Constraint on Romanian <i>se</i>-passives</b>	
Ion Giurgea	<b>1</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>41</b>



## Chapter 1

# On the Person Constraint on Romanian *se*-passives

Ion Giurgea

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It has long been recognized that sentences with passive *se* obey a Person constraint: the subject cannot be 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person. I discuss a further constraint on the subject, manifest in Romanian: not only 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 [Richards \(2008\)](#), 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 ([Belletti 1982](#); [Burzio 1986](#); [Manzini 1986](#); [Cinque 1988](#); [Dobrovie-Sorin 1998](#); 2006; [D’Alessandro 2007](#), 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 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person (Burzio 1986; Cinque 1988; Cornilescu 1998; D'Alessandro 2007; Mendikoetxea 2008; Rezac 2011; MacDonald 2017, a.o.). Cornilescu (1998) noticed that certain 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 properties of *se*-passives (§4-5), comparing them with participial passives, where no Person constraint is found: as *se*-passives lack a dedicated passivizing morpheme, unlike participial passives, the External argument (EA) is bound by a null pronominal 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  $\phi$ -features with the case licensor (Chomsky 2000; 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 sentences 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 Deputaților*, 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 îmbunătățiri de  
SE-have.3PL brought several improvements by experts  
către specialiști.

‘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-Sorin (1998), 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. Belletti 1982; Manzini 1986; Burzio 1986 for Italian, Dobrovie-Sorin 1998; 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.<sup>1</sup>

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):

<sup>1</sup>For Italian, Cinque (1988) 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-Sorin (1998) argues that only Cinque’s [-arg] *si* bears nominative.

- (4) a. Italian (Dobrovie-Sorin 2017: ex. (31c))  
 In questa università si insegna le materie letterarie.  
 in this university SE teaches the humanities  
 ‘Humanities are taught in this university.’
- b. Romanian (ibid.: ex. (32c))  
 În această universitate se predau /\*predă științele 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))  
 (\*Științele 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-Sorin 2017: ex. (33))  
 En esta escuela se castiga a los alumnos.  
 in this school SE punishes DOM the students  
 ‘In this school they punish the students.’
- b. \*Romanian (ibid.: ex. (34))  
 În școala asta se pedepsește pe elevi.  
 in school-the this SE punishes DOM students

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

- (7) a. Italian (Dobrovie-Sorin 2017: 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 mulțumit / mulțumiți.  
 not SE is never satisfied.MSG/MPL

- (8) a. Italian (Dobrovie-Sorin 2017: 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 falși.  
 frequently SE is betrayed by false 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-Sorin 2017: 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))<sup>2</sup>  
 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 și 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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<sup>2</sup>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<sub>arb</sub>, as proposed in §4-5 below, one may analyze the double use of *se* as reflecting agreement in ‘impersonality’ between PRO<sub>arb</sub> in the matrix and the controlled PRO; on a movement theory of control (see Hornstein 1999), this example can be analyzed as involving movement of PRO<sub>arb</sub> 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 vorbește de către* autorități

administrative-teritorial

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](http://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 vorbește de către* anumiți salariați ...

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 așa 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-Sorin 1987; 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 + Result), 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). Bruening (2012), 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/...](http://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 European*  
 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 grăbește*  
           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 / grăbește*  
       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)):

- (15) {*S-a propus / \*A fost propus*} ca votul să  
       SE-has proposed has been proposed that voting-the SBJV be.SBJV.3  
       fie secret  
       secret  
       'It was proposed that the voting should be secret.'

We may thus say that *se*-passives are chiefly used as an impersonalization strategy, in order to demote the EA, whereas participial passives are also used to promote the IA. Impersonal passives are also attested in other languages (Icelandic, German, etc.).

### 3 A Person Constraint on the subject of *se*-passives in Romanian

It is known that *se*-passives are only possible in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, across Romance languages. This also holds for Romanian:

(16) (Dobrovie-Sorin 2017: ex. (124c,e,f))

- a. \*Sunt prietenul tău. Nu mă invit      țipându-se la mine.  
am friend-the your not me invite.1SG shouting-SE at me
- b. \*În ultima vreme te      examinezi prea des la școală.  
in latest-the time you.ACC see.2SG too often in school  
\*for the meaning: ‘Lately you have been getting examined too much in school’
- c. \*În ultima vreme ne      invităm și noi la petreceri.  
in latest-the time we.ACC invite.1PL too we.NOM at parties  
\* for the meaning: ‘Lately we too have been getting invited to parties’

But there are further constraints on the subjects of *se*-passives. Cornilescu (1998) noticed that not only +Participant pronouns, but also 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns and proper names are excluded. She noticed that these are the very same DPs that require the prepositional object marker (*pe*) when they function as direct objects – see, in (17), pronouns, proper nouns, as well as certain specific definite DPs, mostly containing a possessor (see (17c-d)):

- (17) a. La noi întotdeauna se întâmpină {musafirii / \*Ion / \*el} la gară  
at us always SE welcome.3 guests-the / Ion he at station  
‘In our family/department/..., guests/\*Ion/\*he are/is always welcomed at the station.’ (Cornilescu 1998: ex. (16))
- a’. Am întâmpinat musafirii / \*Ion / \*el  
have.1 welcomed guests-the / Ion / he  
‘We welcomed the guests / \*Ion / \*him.’
- a’’. L-am întâmpinat pe Ion / pe el.  
him-have.1 welcomed DOM Ion / DOM he  
‘We welcomed Ion / him.’

- b. Ieri s-au adus {prizonierii / mulți prizonieri / yesterday SE-have.3PL brought prisoners-the / many prisoners / prizonieri/\*ei} la tribunal / \*s-a adus {Ion / el} la prisoners/they to court se-has brought Ion/ he to court tribunal

‘Yesterday {the prisoners / many prisoners / \*they} were brought to the court / {\*Ion/\*he} was brought to the court.’ (ibid.: ex. (17))

- b’. Au adus prizonierii / mulți prizonieri / prizonieri have.3PL brought prisoners-the / many prisoners / prisoners/ / \*ei/\*Ion/\*el la tribunal they/Ion/he to court

‘They brought the prisoners / many prisoners / prisoners / \*them/\*Ion/\*him to the court.’

- b’’. I-au adus pe ei / L-au adus pe Ion them-have.3PL brought DOM they / him-have.3PL brought DOM Ion / pe el / DOM he

‘They brought them/Ion/him.’

- c. \*S-a adus mama lui SE-has brought mother-the his

‘His mother was brought.’

- c’. \*Am adus mama lui have.1 brought mother-the his

- c’’. \*Am adus-o pe mama lui have.1 brought-her(CL) DOM mother-the his  
‘I brought his mother.’

- d. Am convocat profesorii / \*(L-) am have.1 summoned teachers-the CL.MS.ACC-have.1 summoned (DOM) convocat \*(pe) profesorul tău teacher-the your

‘We summoned the teachers / \*your teacher.’

- d’. S-au convocat profesorii / \*S-a convocat SE-have.3PL summoned teachers-the / SE-has summoned



profesorul tău  
teacher-the your

‘The teachers were summoned / \*Your teacher was summoned.’

The correlation discovered by Cornilescu must be further refined in view of examples such as (18), where we see that animate indefinite pronouns, which also require prepositional object marking, may occur as subjects of *se*-passives:

- (18) a. Se va aduce cineva cu experiență.  
SE will.3SG bring somebody with expertise  
‘Somebody with good expertise will be brought.’
- b. Aduc \*(pe) cineva cu experiență.  
bring.3PL (DOM) somebody with expertise
- c. Se știa de mult timp că se va aresta cineva  
SE know.IMPF.3SG for much time that SE will.3SG arrest somebody  
de la vârf  
from top  
‘It had been known for a long time that somebody from the top would be arrested.’ (www.gsp.ro/..., on-line comment)

The difference between animate indefinite pronouns and the DPs in (17) is that for the latter, the differential object marking is realized not only by the preposition, but also by clitic doubling, whereas animate indefinite pronouns do not take clitic doubling (see (18b)). We thus arrive at the following empirical generalization:

- (19) The DPs which cannot be subjects of *se*-passives = those DPs that have to be marked by the prepositional object marking accompanied by clitic doubling when they function as DOs.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns always require doubling and *pe*-marking when functioning as direct objects, thus being covered by (19):

- (20) a. \*Aduce mine  
brings me.ACC(STRONG)
- b. Mă aduce pe mine  
me.ACC.CL brings DOM me.ACC(STRONG)

Differential object marking in Romanian is dependent on multiple factors (see Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Cornilescu 2000; Mardale 2008; Tigău 2010; 2014; a.o.): animacy, specificity, pronominal character, and inflectional properties. Clitic doubling is correlated with definiteness and specificity (see Marchis & Alexiadou 2013): specific and definite DPs are clitic-doubled (i) when they are *pe*-marked or (ii) when they are preverbal (irrespective of whether they are topicalized or focus-fronted). Non-specific pronouns such as *cineva* ‘somebody’, *nimeni* ‘nobody’, *cine* ‘who’ are *pe*-marked in virtue of being pronominal and animate, but they are not clitic-doubled, as they are not specific.

Now, I would like to propose that the DPs characterized by (19) – the requirement for clitic doubling and *pe*-marking when functioning as direct objects, and the impossibility of being subjects (IAs) in *se*-passives – differ from the other nominals in bearing a Person feature:

- (21) a. DPs that require clitic-doubling + *pe*-marking in DO position are +Person.  
b. +Person DPs cannot be subjects of *se*-passives.

[Person] can be + or –Participant. 3<sup>rd</sup> person nominals (using traditional terms) can be either DPs bearing [Person = –Participant] or DPs lacking [Person].

Cornilescu (1998) gives a different interpretation of the generalization, based on denotational type: she proposes that the DPs that require *pe*-marking and cannot be subjects of *se*-passives are DPs that cannot have a property denotation. She argues that animate subjects of *se*-passives must have a property denotation because they must stay in the IA-position, where they undergo semantic incorporation. However, we do find definite DPs as subjects of *se*-passives – see *profesorii* ‘the teachers’ in (17d’), *musafirii* ‘the guests’ in (17a), and *prizonierii* ‘the prisoners’ in (17b) – which clearly cannot be interpreted as pseudo-incorporated property-denoting nominals.

Treating the constraint on subjects of *se*-passives as a Person constraint, as in (21), allows for an explanation in terms of case licensing of IAs via Agree (to be developed in the next sub-section). As for the requirement of clitic-doubling, on the assumption that object licensing involves Agree with  $v^*$ , the clitic can be seen as the manifestation of rich agreement on  $v^*$ , where rich agreement includes Person (for the view of Romance object clitics as probes in  $v^*$ , see Roberts 2010).

The two sides of the generalization in (19) are instantiations of the following broader cross-linguistic generalization:

- (22) DPs that are high on a Person/Animacy/Definiteness hierarchy

- i. are banned in certain structural case environments;
- ii. require distinctive marking when functioning as direct objects.

Both types of phenomena have been treated in terms of differential licensing of +Person DPs in various studies – see, for (i), Sigurðsson (2004; 2011; 2012); Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008), on Icelandic low nominatives with quirky subjects, and Rezac (2011) on various instances of Person-Case constraints. Regarding (ii), see Van der Wal (2015) on differential object marking in Bantu.

A general account of splits among 3<sup>rd</sup> person nominals along the animacy+definiteness scale as presence/absence of [Person] has been proposed by Richards (2008).

## 4 An intervention-based account of the Person constraint

Discussing other instances of Person constraints (PCC and related phenomena), Rezac (2011) proposes the following general explanation, which I will adopt:

- (23) a. A DP must match in all of its (relevant)  $\phi$ -features with its case licenser (assuming case licensing via Agree; see Chomsky 2000; 2001).  
 b. In PC environments, Person matching is impossible, whereas Number matching is possible.<sup>3</sup>  
 c.  $a+b \rightarrow$  the DPs bearing [Person] are ruled out in these environments.

0a is a standard assumption in Minimalism. What needs an explanation is (23b): why is Person matching impossible in certain environments? Using the same Chomskyan framework, Rezac (2011) proposes an intervention-based account: assuming that subject licensing is performed by T, failure of Person matching is due to the existence of a closer goal for T's Person probe; i.e. an element that c-commands IA and is c-commanded by T (an *intervener*), and bears [Person] – see  $\alpha$  in (24):

- (24) [T<sub>[uPerson, uNumber]</sub> [ $\alpha$  +Person [... IA<sub>+Person +Number</sub> ...]]]

For the selective licensing of IAs, depending on +/- Person, it is crucial that this element  $\alpha$  lacks Number, so that it does not block Number agreement. A DP that does not bear Person can undergo full feature matching with T, in spite

<sup>3</sup>The relevance of Person can be seen not only in PCC effects, but also in the licensing of subjects of raising predicates with experiencer arguments: as shown by Anagnostopoulou (2003; 2005) and Marchis & Alexiadou (2013), the Person feature of the dative experiencer creates defective intervention effects in Greek and Romance languages, which can be removed via cliticization.

of the existence of  $\alpha$ , so it complies with the licensing condition in (23a). Given that in Romanian the so-called ‘impersonal *se*’ is an instance of passive *se* (see §2, where I summed up Dobrovie-Sorin’s (1998) arguments), one may wonder how verb agreement is realized in this configuration. As I have not found any evidence for stipulating a null cognate IA in these configurations (as Dobrovie-Sorin 1998 does) – see especially the use of impersonal *se* in unaccusatives in (11) and (13) above – I propose that number agreement fails to apply if no suitable goal is found, without causing a crash of the derivation, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the verb represents a default form. For arguments that failure of agreement does not lead to a crash of the derivation, see Preminger (2014). Note that the same default form is to be assumed for examples such as (15), where the IA is a finite clause, which, as such, lacks  $\varphi$ -features.

One may also envisage the possibility of relating the difference in case licensing between +Person and -Person DPs to a stronger constraint on Agree involving Person, rather than to a particular type of intervener. Such a constraint has been proposed by Baker (2008). Based on extensive crosslinguistic data, Baker postulates a special condition on Person agreement as a universal principle (called the ‘structural condition on Person Agreement’ – SCOPA): the controller (goal) must merge with a projection of the agreeing head (target/probe); in other words, Person agreement requires Spec-Head or Comp-Head configurations<sup>4</sup>. Within this system, one might explain the ban on +Person IAs of *se*-passives by the fact that they cannot raise to SpecTP. But, although there is some evidence that IAs of *se*-passives in other Romance languages, and possibly also in Romanian, do not occur in a non-topical preverbal subject position (see §7 below, ex. (71), and Raposo & Uriagereka 1996; Cornilescu 1998; Dobrovie-Sorin 2006), there is no evidence that +Person subjects in Romanian *need* to occupy SpecTP. As is well known (see Dobrovie-Sorin 1987; 1994; Cornilescu 1997; Alboiu 2002), any type of subject can occur in the postverbal thematic position in Romanian, the preference for pre- or postverbal positions depending on information structure and stylistic factors – see examples of +Person subjects (personal pronouns, proper names) in postverbal position in a presentational (thetic) context (25a), as a narrow focus (25b) or as part of the ‘comment’ in sentences with a non-subject topic (25c):

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<sup>4</sup>Baker’s exact formulation reads as follows:(i) “A functional category F can bear the features +1 or +2 if and only if a projection of F merges with a phrase that has that feature, and F is taken as the label of the resulting phrase.” (Baker 2008: 52)

- (25) a. Deodată ați sunat voi la ușă.  
suddenly have.2PL rung you<sub>pl</sub> at door  
'All of a sudden you rang the doorbell.'
- b. Vei vorbi TU cu directorul.  
will.2SG talk you with manager-the  
'YOU will talk to the manager.'
- c. Ideea o formulase deja Roberts într-un articol celebru.  
idea-the it had-expressed already Roberts in an article  
famous  
'Roberts had already expressed the idea in a famous article / The idea  
had already been expressed by Roberts in a famous article.'

Under Baker's theory, one should assume a doubling preverbal *pro* (carrying the Person feature of the subject) for all these examples, but this does not account for the fact that the postverbal placement is precisely used in order to increase the match between the syntactic structure and the information-structural interpretation: as both the thematic and the information-structural interpretation of the subject are achieved in the postverbal position in examples such as (25), a doubling *pro* would not be justified by any interface effect. Therefore, I think Romanian, as well as other null-subject SV/VS-languages, are potentially problematic for Baker's SCOPA; other problems come from complementizer agreement.<sup>5</sup>

Even if we embrace Baker's framework, we still need to explain why IAs cannot raise to SpecTP in *se*-passives. I assume that the explanation would still resort to some sort of intervention; i.e. to a configuration of the type in (24).

An intervener-based account is also suggested by the fact that we are dealing with a passive configuration. The obvious candidate for the intervener is the element that saturates the external role. I thus adopt the following proposal, which derives the ban on +Person subjects under the assumptions in (23) above:

- (26) The element that saturates the EA in *se*-passives bears a [Person] feature (non-participant).

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<sup>5</sup>Baker (2008) recognizes the problem of complementizer agreement (with the embedded subject in West Germanic varieties, and with the matrix subject in some Niger-Congo languages – Lokaa, Kinande); the solution he proposes is that SpecCP is occupied by Person operators, but there is no independent evidence for the existence of such operators in any of the situations where complementizer agreement occurs.

This element can be conceived of either as a null arbitrary pronoun (see, on the implicit EA of passives in general, Collins 2005; Landau 2010; and on Romance *se*-passives, MacDonald 2017; a.o.) or as the passivizing head itself, under analyses in which EA existential binding is realized by a verbal functional head or verbal morphology (see Baker et al. 1989; Bruening 2012; a.o.).

As both *se*-passives (SePass) and participial passives (‘regular’ passives or ‘copular’ passives,<sup>6</sup> henceforth PartPass) rely on EA demotion, we have to explain why intervention is only found with SePass:

(27) Romanian

- a. \* În ultima vreme ne invităm și noi la petreceri.  
in latest-the time we.ACC invite.1PL too we.NOM at parties  
‘for the meaning: ‘Lately we too have been getting invited to parties.’
- b. În ultima vreme suntem invitați și noi la petreceri.  
in latest-the time are.1PL invited also we at parties  
‘Lately we too have been getting invited to parties.’
- c. \* S-a adus Ion la judecată.  
SE-has brought Ion to judgment
- d. A fost adus Ion la judecată.  
has been brought Ion to judgment  
‘Ion has been brought to trial.’

There are several possibilities we have to investigate:

- (i) EA is projected in SePass (and bears a Person feature) but not in PartPass;
- (ii) EA is projected in both types of passive, but only in SePass does it bear a Person feature;
- (iii) EA +Person is projected in both types of passives, but only intervenes in SePass, because in PartPass IA first raises to a higher position, either by itself, to the Spec of the passivizing participial head, or as part of the whole VP, as proposed by Collins (2005), who dubs this operation ‘smuggling’;

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<sup>6</sup>I don’t use the term ‘copular passive’, because the passive syntax comes entirely from the participle – it can be found in attributive contexts and non-copular small clause contexts, and *be* is not a passive auxiliary; Romanian, in which auxiliaries are clitics, clearly shows this (the *be* which appears in ‘copular passives’ is not a clitic, but a regular full verb).

- (iv) EA is not projected in a thematic position, but is existentially bound by a passivizing head, and it is this head itself that bears the intervening Person feature in SePass, but not in PartPass.

I will show that an account in terms of (iii) faces empirical problems. On the other hand, the idea that the element that saturates the EA bears a Person feature in SePass but not in PartPass is supported by the well-known generalization that the EA of *se*-passives is restricted to animates (Burzio 1994; Cornilescu 1998; Dobrovie-Sorin 2017; Zribi-Hertz 2008, a.o.):

- (28) Romanian  
 Oraşul { a fost distrus / \* s-a distrus } de  
 city-the has been destroyed SE-has destroyed by earthquake  
 (către) cutremur .

‘The city was destroyed by the earthquake.’

We have seen, in §3, that the differences in case/agreement properties of DPs depending on animacy can be described in terms of a difference between +Person and absence of Person. Pursuing this line of thought, we may interpret the restriction of EA in SePass to humans as the effect of the presence of a Person feature on the element that saturates the EA.

In order to further clarify the structure of the two types of passives and the nature of the intervener, we need to address the issue of *by*-phrases. As we have seen in §2, not only PartPass, but also SePass allow *by*-phrases in Romanian (see examples (2c-d), (10), (13)).<sup>7</sup> The DP introduced by the agentive preposition (Romanian *de către/de* ‘by’) is an obvious candidate for what has been called, in (26), ‘the element that saturates the EA’. However, there is no evidence that *by*-phrases in SePass occupy a different position than in PartPass. In both configurations, when the subject remains postverbal, *by*-phrases follow it in the unmarked order:

- (29) a. S-au formulat plângeri de către autoritatea contractantă.  
 SE-have.3PL expressed complaints by

<sup>7</sup>By-phrases in *se*-passives can also be found in Spanish (see MacDonald2016)

MacDonald2016 missing in bib

and some varieties of French (see Authier & Reed 1996; Zribi-Hertz 2008); they are generally more restricted than in regular (participial) passives.

authority-the contracting

‘Complaints have been expressed by the contracting authority.’  
([www.cnsr.ro/wp-content/uploads/bo/2014/BO2014\\_0290.pdf](http://www.cnsr.ro/wp-content/uploads/bo/2014/BO2014_0290.pdf))

- a’. Au fost formulate plângeri de către autoritatea  
have been expressed.FPL complaints(F) by authority-the  
contractantă.  
contracting
- b. S-au propus numeroase ipoteze de către  
SE-have.3PL proposed many hypotheses by researchers  
cercetători din domenii foarte variate.  
from domains very varied  
‘Many hypotheses have been proposed by researchers from various  
domains.’ (<http://revistateologica.ro/vechi/articol.php?r=79&a=4952>)
- b’. Au fost propuse numeroase ipoteze de către  
have been proposed.FPL many hypotheses(F) by researchers  
cercetători din domenii foarte variate.  
from domains very varied

If the *by*-phrase, or the DP introduced by *by*, had occupied the thematic EA position, higher than the IA, we would have expected it to occur after the IA in the unmarked order. Collins (2005) proposed that the DP introduced by *by* occupies the thematic EA position, the preposition spells out a head Voice and the VP, including the IA, raises to SpecVoice; this derives the order V-IA-EA. Collins argues that, due to VP-raising above the EA, the intervention effect of the EA is removed, and the IA can enter Agree with T (therefore he calls this operation ‘smuggling’):

(30) [VoiceP [VP V IA] [ [Voice0 *by*] [<sub>VP</sub> EA [<sub>v</sub> t<sub>VP</sub>]]]]

Note now that the order predicted by smuggling is found not only in PartPass (where there is no intervention), but also in SePass.

The same problem appears if we assume that IA escapes intervention of the EA in PartPass by raising as a DP, to the specifier of a head that c-commands EA.

Therefore, I would like to adopt the traditional analysis of *by*-phrases as adjuncts, in its updated version proposed by Bruening (2012), with some amendments which account for the fact that the intervener is still active in the presence of a *by*-phrase (see (31)).



- (31) \* S-a propus el/Maria de către angajați.  
 SE-has nominated he/Maria by employees  
 Intended meaning: ‘He/Maria was proposed by the employees.’

Bruening (2012) proposes that *by*-phrases are *selective* adjuncts: they attach to a VoiceP (corresponding to Chomsky’s vP) with an unsaturated argument slot, and saturate this argument. He assumes that passives involve a Pass head on top of a passive VoiceP – in terms of selection, Pass selects a Voice with an unsaturated selectional feature (in the following representation, ‘S’ stands for ‘selectional feature’):

- (32) Pass[S:Voice(S:N)] (Bruening 2012: 22, ex. (84))

Furthermore, he proposes that adjuncts select their host themselves, but the label of the selectee projects (this is marked by the diacritic feature ‘a’ on the selectional feature). Under these assumptions, the restriction of *by*-phrases to verbal or deverbal configurations with demoted EAs can be represented by the following selectional rule:

- (33) *by* [S:N, S<sub>a</sub>:Voice(S:N)] (Bruening 2012: 26, ex. (92))

*By* first selects a nominal projection, and the whole [*by*+DP] constituents, due to the second selectional feature of *by*, combines with a VoiceP with an unsaturated selectional feature.

For the Pass head, Bruening assumes a variable semantic contribution – it saturates the EA unless the EA has already been saturated (by the *by*-phrase):

- (34)  $\llbracket \text{Pass} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda e. \exists x (f(x, e))$  or  $\lambda f_{\langle st \rangle} \lambda e. f(e)$  (cf. Bruening 2012: 25, ex. (91a))

I follow the main lines of this account, with the following important amendment: in order to solve the problem of the ambiguity in the denotation of Pass, I propose that the *by*-phrase specifies (identifies) the EA but leaves it unsaturated, as represented in (35):

- (35)  $\llbracket by \rrbracket = \lambda x \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda y \lambda e. (x=y [F0D9?]) f(x, e)$

The existential binding of the EA always applies at a higher level, PassP, irrespective of whether a *by*-P is present in the complement of Pass or not. Thus, Pass always makes a semantic contribution, which is the first line of (34):

- (36)  $\llbracket \text{Pass} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda e. \exists x (f(x, e))$

Bruening does not adopt this rule in order to prevent *by*-phrases from combining with actives. But there are other ways in which we can prevent *by*-phrases from combining with actives. One is to specify *by* as selecting a *passive*  $v$  (using the label  $v$  for Bruening’s Voice with an unsaturated EA):

$$(37) \quad by [S:N, S_a:v_{pass}]$$

Alternatively, if adjuncts are not allowed to attach below specifiers, it suffices that *by*-phrases select  $v$ ; since their denotation (see (35)) requires a constituent with an unsaturated e-type argument, only  $v$ Ps that introduce an EA in semantics, but not in syntax will be allowed: if  $v$  is unergative/transitive, it will introduce a specifier below the adjunct, so the *by*-phrase will not be able to combine with a phrase with an unsaturated e-type argument.

What is important for our discussion is that the level where the EA is saturated is higher than the level where *by*-phrases are attached, and EA saturation is independent of *by*-phrases. This solves the issue raised by the absence of contrasts regarding *by*-phrases between PartPass and SePass, exemplified in (29).

Now, we can also imagine the saturating element as a null pronoun in SpecPass, rather than the Pass head itself. In this case, the Pass head would not contribute directly to interpretation, but rather indirectly, by taking a null arbitrary pronoun as a specifier:

$$(38) \quad \text{Pass } [S:v_{non-act}, S: PRO_{arb}] \\ \llbracket \text{Pass} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda x \lambda e. f(x, e)$$

Under both alternatives, the distinguishing property of SePass would be the presence of a Person feature on the binder – either on Pass itself or on  $PRO_{arb}$ . In case Pass itself saturates EA, the presence of a Person feature on Pass is justified by the +human restriction on the existentially bound variable:

$$(39) \quad \llbracket \text{Pass}_{+3} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda e. \exists x (\text{human}(x) [F0D9?] f(x, e))$$

Summing up, we have so far suggested two possible structures that may account for the intervention effect in SePass:

$$(40) \quad \begin{array}{ll} \text{a. } [\text{PassP } PRO\text{-}ARB_{+Person} [\text{Pass } [v_P v [v_P V IA]]]] \\ \text{b. } [\text{PassP } Pass_{+Person} [v_P v [v_P V IA]]] \end{array}$$

As regards the type of null pronominal EA, I assume a null arbitrary pronoun that bears null Case<sup>8</sup> and is case-licensed in situ by Pass, hence the label  $PRO_{arb}$ .

<sup>8</sup>On ‘null case’ see Chomsky & Lasnik (1993); Bošković (1995; 1997); Martin (2001).

I do not treat it as *pro*, as proposed by MacDonald (2017) for the EA of SePass in Spanish, because *pro* has nominative case, which means that in those configurations allowed by the Person Constraint, T would assign nominative twice, to two non-co-indexed DPs – both to the EA and to the IA – which is not compatible with the overall structural case system of Romanian.

In the next section, we will further elaborate on the structure of SePass in contrast with PartPass, looking at binding properties.

## 5 On the presence of a null EA in *se*-passives

In order to establish the existence and syntactic status of implicit arguments, various binding tests are usually employed.

When we compare SePass and PartPass, a difference emerges regarding binding of secondary predicates and the anaphor *sine* ‘(one)self’ by the EA, SePass allowing binding more easily than PartPass. However, the examples are not always fully acceptable with SePass, nor are they totally excluded with PartPass, as one would have hoped.

The following examples show the results of a questionnaire given to 10 native speakers, who marked the examples on a scale with four degrees of acceptability (\*, ??, ?, OK). The most acceptable examples have impersonal SePass – i.e., SePass based on intransitives – in generic deontic contexts (see also (11b)), in which case a direct comparison with PartPass is impossible, as PartPass cannot be built on intransitives.<sup>9</sup> With transitive bases, although the examples of SePass are not fully acceptable, we still find a contrast with PartPass:

- (41) a. %?? Scrisoarea pare a fi fost scrisă beat. (18%)  
letter-the seems to have been written drunk.MSG  
‘The letter seems to have been written drunk.’
- a’. ?? Scrisoarea asta a fost scrisă beat. (18%)  
letter-the this has been written drunk.MSG
- b. %?? Așa ceva nu se scrie beat. (56%)  
such something not SE writes drunk.MSG  
‘Something like that should not be written drunk.’

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<sup>9</sup>The only exception is in the complement of *trebui* ‘must’, a construction which I cannot address here: (i) Trebuie mers de dimineață. must gone of morning ‘One must go in the morning.’

- (42) a. %? Nu se acordă premii sie însuși / sieși. (80%)  
 not SE awards prizes self.DAT EMPH 3REFL.DAT  
 ‘One does not award prizes to oneself.’
- b. ??/\* Nu sunt acordate premii sie însuși / sieși. (25%)  
 not are awarded prizes self.DAT EMPH / 3REFL.DAT  
 ‘\*Prizes are not awarded to himself.’
- c. %?? Cartea a fost de fapt scrisă despre sine. (60%)  
 book-the has been actually written about self  
 ‘The book has actually been written about oneself.’

Here are the examples of SePass with intransitives:

- (43) a. %? Nu se conduce beat. (83%)  
 not SE drives drunk.MSG  
 ‘One does not drive drunk.’
- b. %? Până la plajă se poate merge gol. (80%)  
 to beach SE can walk naked.MSG  
 ‘One can walk to the beach naked.’
- (44) Nu așa se vorbește/scrie despre sine. (100%)  
 not so SE speaks / writes about self  
 ‘One does (should) not speak/write like this about oneself.’

Control in *without*-clauses is very marginal with both types of passives, and control in purpose clauses is equally fine with both, but it is worth noting that Romanian adjunct infinitives allow a disjointed or overt subject, which reduces the relevance of these tests:

- (45) ?? Cărțile s-au vândut / au fost vândute fără a  
 books-the.FPL SE-have sold / have been sold without to  
 le citi.  
 them.FPL read  
 ‘(\*)The books were sold without reading them.’ (21% *s-au vândut*, 31%  
*au fost vândute*)
- (46) Aceste haine se vând / sunt vândute pentru a ajuta săracii.  
 these clothes SE sell.3PL / are sold for to help poor-the  
 ‘These clothes are sold to help the poor.’

Another instance of binding where the EA of SePass is more active than the EA of PartPass was discovered by MacDonald (2017) for Spanish, and also applies to Romanian. In Romance languages, definite DP objects denoting body-parts can be interpreted as possessed by the subject:

- (47) a. Spanish (MacDonald 2017: ex. (15a))  
 El estudiante levantó la mano.  
 the student raised the hand  
 b. Romanian  
 Studentul a ridicat mâna.  
 student-the has raised hand-the  
 ‘The student raised his hand.’

This construction does not rely on a general interpretive property of implicit possessors, but rather on a syntactic binding relation, as shown by the fact that the body-part and the possessor must be in a local relation (see MacDonald 2017 for details):

- (48) Spanish (MacDonald 2017: ex. (15a))  
 Juan<sub>i</sub> dijo que María<sub>j</sub> había cerrado los ojos<sub>\*i/j</sub>.  
 Juan said that María had closed the eyes  
 ‘Juan said that María had closed her/\*his eyes.’

MacDonald argues that the body-part DP can be an IA possessed by the implicit EA in SePass, but not in PartPass. (49a) has a passive *se*, as shown by plural agreement (recall that *se* in Spanish can also rely on an active configuration; see §2). The interpretation is ‘(some of) the people present raised their hands’; the EA is the inalienable possessor of the IA, and the verb is interpreted as involving controlled motion of the body part (the immediate effect of internal biological mechanisms). With a PartPass, such as in (49b), such an interpretation is excluded: the IA is not interpreted as a body-part of the EA; the sentence expresses a change in the position of somebody’s head as the result of the EA’s action (e.g. using his hands to push the head up).

- (49) a. Spanish (MacDonald 2017: ex. (21a))  
 El profesor hizo una pregunta. Se levantaron unas/las manos.  
 the professor made a question SE raised.3PL some/the hands  
 ‘The professor asked a question. Some of their/Their hands raised.’

- b. Spanish (ibid.: ex. (23))  
 La cabeza fue levantada (por Juan).  
 the head was raised by Juan  
 = ‘The head was raised (by Juan).’  
 ≠ ‘Juan/somebody raised his head.’

This contrast is found in Romanian too (in (50), the continuation with a Part-Pass does not have the sensible interpretation ‘some people raised their hands’):

- (50) Romanian  
 Profesorul a pus o întrebare. S-au ridicat / #Au fost  
 professor-the has put a question SE-have raised / have been raised  
 ridicate niște mâini.  
 some hands  
 ‘The professor asked a question. Some raised their hands / #Some hands  
 have been raised.’

One might wonder whether we are not dealing with anticausative *se* here. The possibility of a passive construal is ascertained by the fact that (50) allows a continuation with a purpose clause:

- (51) Până la urmă s-au ridicat niște mâini, probabil pentru  
 eventually SE-have raised some hands probably for to-him please  
 a-l mulțumi pe profesor.  
 DOM teacher  
 ‘Eventually some raised their hands, probably to please the teacher.’

Here is another example of control into a purpose clause, modeled after MacDonald’s example (20a):

- (52) Aici, pentru a pune o întrebare se ridică mâna.  
 here for to put a question SE raises hand-the  
 ‘Here, in order to ask a question, one raises one’s hand.’

To conclude, various tests indicate that EA in SePass has a greater capacity for binding than in PartPass. This supports the view that the binder of the EA in SePass, the element bearing Person, is a PRO<sub>arb</sub>, as represented in (40a), whereas for PartPass, the binder might be the functional head Pass itself, as proposed for passives in general by Bruening (see (36)). We may thus represent the two types of passives in Romanian as follows (on the position of the morpheme *se*, see §6):

- (53) a.  $[\text{PassPartP } \text{PassPart} [\text{vP } \nu [\text{VP } \text{V IA}] (\text{by-P})]]$   
 $\llbracket \text{PassPart} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda e. \exists x (f(x, e))$   
 b.  $[\text{PassSeP } \text{PRO}_{arb} [\text{Pass}_{se} [\text{vP } \nu [\text{VP } \text{V IA}] (\text{by-P})]]]$   
 $\llbracket \text{Pass}_{se} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda x \lambda e. f(x, e)$

## 6 Note on the status of *se*

The idea that the projection of the EA in syntax distinguishes *SePass* from *PartPass* might find further support in morphology. *PartPass* have a dedicated passive inflection on the V,<sup>10</sup> whereas verbal forms with the clitic *se* are notoriously ambiguous between several interpretations – reflexive, reciprocal, anticausative, middle, and passive. We may thus assume that the saturation of the EA (by existential closure) is overtly signalled by the passive morphology in *PartPass*, this morphology spelling out the head *Pass* with the denotation in (36)/(53a). For *SePass*, on the other hand, assuming that *se* does not realize *Pass*, but is attached at the vP-level, the projection of a specifier would be necessary in order to make the *Pass*-level visible. Thus, the saturation of the EA is achieved via a null pronoun rather than the *Pass* head itself.

One could of course also envisage that *se* spells out the *Pass* head. But I believe that if we attempt to give, as far as possible, a unitary treatment of all the uses of *se*, it is more convenient to attach it at the vP-level.

The issue of a unitary treatment of all the uses of *se* is a complex and much-debated problem, which cannot be settled here (see Dobrovie-Sorin 2017 for an overview of the various proposals). I will confine myself to some tentative remarks.

Romanian *se* is ambiguous between an accusative reflexive/reciprocal clitic and a voice marker, the latter occurring in anticausatives, inherent/intransitive reflexives, inherent reciprocals, middles and passives. The accusative clitic status of *se* is clear when it doubles an object pronoun (which must, of course, be coreferent with the subject):

<sup>10</sup>The passive participle in the masculine singular is formally identical with the past participle, but the two forms never occur in the same syntactic environment – the past participle is always selected by certain auxiliaries, which are T/Asp/Mood morphemes inside the verbal clitic cluster in Romanian (see Dobrovie-Sorin (1994) for details); the passive participle never occurs in this environment. Note also that the copula in the *be*+*PassPart* construction is not a clitic auxiliary in Romanian, but behaves as a full verb, supporting the treatment of periphrastic passives as regular copular constructions.

- (54) Maria<sub>i</sub> \*(se) admiră pe sine / pe ea<sub>i</sub>.  
 Maria SE admires DOM self.ACC DOM her  
 ‘Maria admires herself.’

Even when it does not double a strong accusative pronoun, there is evidence that sometimes reflexive *se* is an object pronoun rather than a valency reduction marker; thus, (55) has not only the sloppy reading ‘Maria admires herself and the others do not admire themselves’, but also the strict reading ‘Maria admires herself and the others do not admire Maria’. The strict reading cannot be derived if there is a single argument and the predicate is reflexivized ( $\lambda x.$ admires( $x, x$ )). (55) thus involves what I would call a ‘transitive’ or ‘two-place’ reflexive.<sup>11</sup>

- (55) Doar Maria se admiră.  
 only Maria SE admires  
 ‘Only Maria admires herself.’

As a voice marker, *se* is associated with valency reduction, except in passives and symmetric verbs, and with accusative suspension for transitive verbs.

Reflexive *se* sometimes relies on an intransitive configuration, where the agent and patient theta-roles are assigned to a single argument. This typically obtains with motion verbs, which express actions that have an immediate result on the agent (e.g., with *se mișca* ‘SE move’, the agent’s action automatically involves the change of his motion state, whereas in *a mișca ceva* ‘to move something’, the effect of the agent’s action on the motion state of another entity is foregrounded) – hence the label ‘autocausative’.<sup>12</sup>

- (56) a. Maria s-a ridicat (\*pe sine) în picioare.  
 Maria SE-has raised DOM self in feet  
 ‘Maria stood up.’  
 b. Maria s-a grăbit (\*pe sine) să ajungă.  
 Maria SE-has hurried DOM self SBJV arrives  
 ‘Maria hurried to be on time.’

Verbs that express actions usually performed on oneself, such as grooming verbs (*se spăla* ‘wash’, *se rade* ‘shave’, *se îmbrăca* ‘get dressed’, etc.), are also good

<sup>11</sup>On the use of the strict/sloppy reading test for reflexives, see Sells et al. (1987); Labelle (2008). For the treatment of *se*-reflexives as intransitive, one-place predicates derived by a reflexivization rule (or theta-bundling), see Reinhart2005, Labelle (2008).

<sup>12</sup>See Geniušienė 1987.



candidates for one-place reflexives (cf. the intransitive use in English and the oddity of adding a strong anaphor – ??*Se rade pe sine* ‘He’s shaving himself’).

In a system that allows movement to thematic positions (see Hornstein 1999, Ramchand 2008), the bundling of the Initiator and Undergoer roles can be represented as movement of the IA to SpecvP, the thematic EA position (Alboiu et al. 2004 and Medová 2009, who cites a 1986 talk by Kayne for this idea; see also Ramchand 2008 for movement from SpecProc to SpecInit).

Anticausatives (or inchoatives) are characterized by the suppression of the Agent/Initiator role (see Schäfer 2008 for discussion). *v* may be taken to introduce a causing event, but it does not introduce any argument in the denotation (as opposed to passive *v*); the Cause may be expressed by a PP-adjunct:

- (57) Geamul s-a spart de la explozie.  
window-the SE-has broken from explosion  
‘The window broke from the explosion.’

Psych-verbs resemble inchoatives in that the IA becomes the subject, but two arguments continue to be projected, with the Stimulus being introduced as a PP:

- (58) Se sperie de câine / Câinele îl sperie.  
SE frightens of dog dog-the him frightens  
‘He’s frightened of the dog / The dog frightens him.’

Based on its use as a reciprocal pronoun, *se* developed the function of marking inherent reciprocal verbs. Here we have a change in the argument pattern – as the same entities are in turn agents and patients, they are realized as with symmetric predicates, as S+ *with* or a plurality (see (59a), vs. the transitive reciprocal use in (59b)):

- (59) a. Ion se bate cu Andrei. / Ion și Andrei se bat.  
Ion SE beats with Andrei Ion and Andrei REFL beat  
‘Ion is fighting Andrei. / Ion and Andrei are fighting.’  
b. Ion și Andrei se bat unul pe altul.  
Ion and Andrei SE beat one DOM another  
‘Ion and Andrei are beating each other.’

The middle use also relies on the suppression of the Agent role, being a syntactic anticausative, but retaining an agent in the conceptual structure (see Schäfer 2008):

- (60) Cartea se vinde bine.  
 book-the SE sells well  
 ‘The book sells well.’

Verbs which necessarily take *se*, the so-called ‘inherent *se*-verbs’, can almost always be claimed to belong to one of the aforementioned types (e.g. *se însera* ‘to dusk’ – inchoative, *se învecina* ‘to border, neighbour’ – symmetric (inherent reciprocal), *se foi* ‘to scurry, to toss from side to side’ – autocausive (one-place reflexive)).

The argument structure operations signalled by the voice marker *se* mainly affect the EA, the argument introduced by *v*, and accusative licensing, which is also currently assigned to *v*: (i) the EA is suppressed (anticausatives, middles, psych-verbs), (ii) the EA and IA roles are unified, possibly by moving the IA (deep object) to the EA position (one-place reflexives) or (iii) the EA is introduced in the denotation but no DP is merged in Spec $\nu$ P (no specifier is selected) (passives). Further operations on internal arguments are found in minor types – psych-verbs and inherent reciprocal verbs. Regarding case-licensing, all these varieties of *v* share the property of lacking accusative assignment (which is correlated with the lack of an externally-merged Spec – ‘Burzio’s generalization’). Leaving aside unmarked unaccusatives (which might lack *v* completely), we find the following contrast between active *v* (labelled  $v^*$ ) and the *v* found in *se*-verbs:

- (61)  $v^*$ : + externally-merged Spec, (+ accusative)  
 $v_{SE}$ : -externally-merged Spec, - accusative

*Se* may thus be the spell-out of the common features shared by these varieties of *v*, represented in 0 (this partial unification can be implemented in Distributed Morphology, using the subset principle). The various uses of *se* are obtained by adding extra features to this common core (these extra features are not spelled out). As for the fact that *se* behaves exactly like pronominal clitics in terms of placement (it even undergoes clitic-climbing; e.g. *se poate sparge* ‘SE can break’ = ‘It can break’), I refer to Roberts’s (2010) account, which treats object clitics in general as probes in *v*, rather than moved pronouns, and makes use of a restricted version of excorporation to explain clitic-climbing.

To conclude, if *se* spells out features of *v*, the higher head Pass must be taken to be null, which might motivate the projection of a specifier with a Person feature in order to saturate the EA, as proposed in the previous section.

## 7 Intervention and further constraints on subjects of *se*-passives

Raposo & Uriagereka (1996) argue that in Portuguese, the subject (IA) of *se*-passives never occupies the dedicated preverbal subject position (when preverbal, it is in a topic or focus position). Some restrictions have also been noticed for French – Stéfanini (1962) and Ruwet (1972) claim that eventive passive *se*-verbs are only allowed with impersonal *il*+postverbal S (as opposed to habitual *se*-passives, which might in fact represent middles), but Zribi-Hertz (1982; 2008) found a series of counterexamples to this generalization. That subjects of SePass do not have access to the canonical subject position has also been argued for Romanian, by Cornilescu (1998). As for Romanian, it is difficult to identify a preverbal position dedicated to subjects; Cornilescu used other tests, namely subject-to-object raising from finite clauses and gerunds. The constraint is claimed to hold only for animate subjects.

Here are some examples. (62a) shows a construction without raising: the *se*-verb in the subordinate clause allows a passive interpretation alongside a reciprocal one (a reflexive interpretation is of course also possible, but unlikely due to world knowledge). (62b-c) shows a construction in which a perception verb takes a direct object and an indicative complement clause, and the direct object is interpreted as the subject of the subordinate clause – Cornilescu calls it ‘subject-to-object raising’, but one might also treat it as an instance of control.<sup>13</sup> Irrespective of the exact analysis of this construction, what is important is that the *se*-verb here loses its passive interpretation:

- (62) a. Am văzut că se bat copiii în școli. (reciprocal,  
have.1 seen that SE beat.3PL children-the in schools  
passive)

‘I’ve seen that children {fight / are beaten} in schools.’

- b. I-am văzut pe copii că se bat în școli.  
CL.ACC-have.1 seen DOM children that SE beat.3PL in schools  
(reciprocal, \*passive)

‘I saw children {fighting / \*being beaten} in schools.’

<sup>13</sup>For a detailed treatment, see Alboiu & Hill (2013; 2016), who argue for a particular type of raising (not performed for Case reasons, as in ECM, but triggered by an evidentiality feature on the matrix *v*).

- c. Pe cine ai văzut că se bat în școli? (reciprocal,  
DOM whom have.2SG seen that SE beat in schools  
\*passive)

‘Who did you see {fighting / \*being beaten} in schools?’ (Cornilescu 1998: ex. (24))

(63) shows the same contrast with gerunds following perception verbs: the gerund’s subject can be licensed in the gerund clause, postverbally, or in the matrix clause, by ECM (evidence for an ECM analysis can be found in Avram 2003); in the latter case, the passive reading of *se*-verbs is excluded:

- (63) a. Am văzut împușcându-se oameni nevinovați. (✓ passive)  
have.1 seen shooting-SE people innocent  
‘I saw innocent people being shot.’  
b. Pe cine ai văzut împușcându-se? (✓ reciprocal/reflexive,  
DOM whom have.2SG seen shooting-SE  
\*passive)

‘Who did you see shooting each other / shooting themselves/ \*being shot?’ (Cornilescu 1998, ex. (26))

- (64) a. Am văzut pedepsindu-se copiii cu asprime. (✓ passive)  
have.1 seen punishing-SE children-the with harshness  
‘I saw the children being punished harshly.’  
b. (I-)am văzut {pe copii / copiii}  
(CL)-have.1 seen DOM children children-the punishing-SE  
pedepsindu-se cu asprime. (\*passive)  
with harshness  
‘I saw the children {punishing themselves/each other/\*being punished} harshly.’ (ibid.: ex. (29))

Within the analysis I have proposed, we may explain these facts as follows: although the intervener EA allows case licensing of the IA by a second Agree relation of T, presumably Number agreement, the intervener blocks case-related movement of the IA. A similar situation is found in Icelandic quirky subject constructions – the structurally case-marked Theme remains postverbal and is possible only in the third person; the higher argument, an inherently case-marked

DP, which is the intervener for person agreement, raises to the canonical subject position:

- (65) a. \*Honum líkum við. (Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008: ex. (7))  
 him.DAT like.1PL we.NOM  
 b. \*Honum líkið þið.  
 him.DAT like.1PL we.NOM  
 c. Honum líka þeir.  
 him.DAT like.3PL they.NOM  
 ‘He likes \*us/\*you/them.’

For the construction in (62), with finite indicative clauses, if we assume control, we have to conclude that control targets the *highest* argument – which, under my analysis, is the null pronominal EA in SePass. This is again confirmed by Icelandic quirky subjects, as well as by further Romanian data: as Alboiu & Hill (2016) notice, in constructions with oblique experiencers, the matrix object can be interpreted as the oblique experiencer:

- (66) a. L-am văzut pe Ion că i-a fost foame.  
 CL.ACC-have.1 seen DOM Ion that him.DAT-has been hunger  
 ‘I saw that Ion was hungry.’ (Alboiu & Hill 2016: ex. (31b))  
 b. Am văzut-o pe Maria că îi place jazzul.  
 have.1 seen-CL.ACC DOM Maria that her.DAT likes jazz-the  
 ‘I saw that Maria likes jazz.’

Note that my account does not predict any difference between animate and inanimate subjects of SePass regarding the contrasts in (62)-(64), contra Cornilescu (1998). Note first that the constructions with *că* ‘that’-clauses are not fully acceptable with inanimate objects in general; the test of *cum* ‘how’-clauses, used by Cornilescu, is irrelevant because such clauses do not require that the direct object of the matrix verb be interpreted as their subject:

- (67) Am văzut-o pe Maria cum o băteau.  
 have.1 seen-CL.ACC DOM Maria how her were-beating.3PL  
 ‘I saw Maria being beaten by them.’

More problematic are the examples with gerunds, illustrated in (68), where the pronominal demonstrative (which allows *pe*-marking with inanimates) refers to shirts and buildings, respectively:

- (68) a. Le-am văzut pe astea vânzându-se destul de repede.  
 CL.ACC-have.1 seen DOM these selling-SE enough of quickly  
 ‘I saw these (shirts) being sold quite quickly.’ (Cornilescu 1998: ex. (33))
- b. Pe astea le-am văzut dărâmându-se chiar eu.  
 DOM these CL.ACC-have.1 seen pulling-down-SE even I  
 ‘I myself saw these (buildings) being pulled down.’ (ibid.: ex. (37))

A possible account is that (68a) in fact represents a middle construction (i.e., without a projected EA; for more on middles, see the Appendix) and (68b) an anticausative, receiving an agentive interpretation contextually, due to world knowledge. I indeed believe that an overt *by*-phrase in (68) is not acceptable (but further empirical research is necessary on this point):

- (69) ?? Pe astea le-am văzut dărâmându-se de către primărie.  
 DOM these CL.ACC-have.1 seen pulling-down-SE by city-hall  
 ‘I saw these (buildings) being pulled down by the city hall.’

Regarding preverbal subjects, although admittedly they are hard to distinguish from topics, there are contexts where a nominal can be claimed to occur preverbally due to its subject status, rather than topicality or another information-structural feature. Thus, consider all-new (out-of-the-blue) environments, where the subject is an indefinite that is totally new – i.e. neither previously mentioned, nor partitive or otherwise context-linked – and furthermore is not generic (thus, it cannot qualify as a topic, according to the conditions on indefinite topics established by Erteschik-Shir 2007, which appear to hold for Romanian). We can see in (70a) that, especially if there are other constituents following the V, the subject can be preverbal in this context; (70b-c) show that if the same indefinite is an oblique or direct object argument, the preverbal position is not allowed; (70d) shows that this indefinite cannot undergo long-distance topicalization, even if it is a subject.

- (70) [Context: all-new, beginning of a news report]
- a. O barcă plină cu arme de contrabandă a acostat azi lângă  
 a boat full of weapons of smuggling has landed today near  
 Constanța.  
 Constanța  
 ‘A boat full of smuggled weapons has landed today near Constanța.’

- b. # Cu o barcă plină de arme de contrabandă au sosit mai  
 with a boat full of weapons of smuggling have arrived several  
 mulți turci la Constanța.  
 Turks to Constanța  
 ‘Several Turks arrived in Constanța with a boat full of smuggled  
 weapons.’
- c. # O barcă plină de arme de contrabandă a oprit-o  
 a boat full of weapons of smuggling has stopped-CL.ACC  
 paza de coastă la Constanța.  
 guard-the of coast at Constanța  
 ‘The coast guard arrested a boat full of smuggled weapons in  
 Constanța.’
- d. # O barcă plină de arme de contrabandă s-a anunțat că  
 a boat full of weapons of smuggling SE-has announced that  
 a acostat astăzi lângă Constanța.  
 has landed today near Constanța  
 ‘It has been reported that a boat full of smuggled weapons has  
 landed today near Constanța.’

Notice now that in this very same context, the subject of SePass is not felicitous in preverbal positions, whereas the subject of PartPass, like the subject in (70a), is allowed:

- (71) O barcă plină cu arme de contrabandă {a fost găsită / #s-a  
 a boat full of weapons of smuggling has been found SE-has found  
 găsit} azi lângă Constanța.  
 today near Constanța  
 ‘A boat full of smuggled weapons has been found today near Constanța.’

This contrast supports the proposal that the EA is projected as a null pronominal in SePass. As the preverbal position is not necessary for case assignment in Romanian, we can assume that in contexts such as (70a), where no constituent inherently qualifies as a topic, there is the option of raising to the preverbal position *the closest (highest) argument* (see [Giurgea 2012](#)), presumably due to a [D]-feature of the relevant probe.

## 8 Conclusions

*Se*-passives in Romanian are a construction in which the DP that agrees with the verb does not have full subject properties (see §7) and is subject to a general formal constraint – it cannot be a DP that needs differential object marking + clitic doubling when occurring as a direct object. This constraint can be included in the family of Person constraints if we assume that 3<sup>rd</sup> person animate specific DPs have a [Person] feature (specified as -Participant), whereas other non-participant DPs lack a Person feature completely. These facts can be explained by the existence of an EA syntactically projected as a null arbitrary PRO in *se*-passives; as it bears a Person feature, this element intervenes in the case licensing of +Person IAs. We have seen that *by*-phrases are possible in *se*-passives, and they do not represent the intervener. Therefore, we adopted an analysis of *by*-phrases along the lines of Bruening (2012), as adjuncts attached to a *v*P with an unsaturated argument, below the level where the EA is saturated. This led to the conclusion that the null EA of *se*-passives is projected as the Spec of a Pass head above the *v*P. We further proposed that in participial passives the passivizing head existentially binds the EA itself. The projection of a specifier in order to saturate this argument position was related to the fact that *se*-passives do not have a dedicated morphology (unlike participial passives): the element *se* also characterizes other Voice configurations (one-place reflexive, anticausative, inherent reciprocal). Therefore, we suggested that *se* is generated at the *v*P-level and does not spell out Pass.

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## Appendix: Apparent exceptions to the Person constraint rely on middle SE

Perceptual verbs seem to provide counterexamples to the Person constraint discussed in this article, allowing even +Person subjects, including 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, in sentences with a modal or iterative interpretation:



- (72) a. Ne auzim bine în această sală.  
us hear.1PL well in this hall  
'One can hear us well in this hall.'
- b. Ion și Maria, acolo unde stau, se văd de departe.  
Ion and Maria there where stay.3PL SE see.3PL from far  
'Ion and Maria, where they are standing, can be seen from afar.'
- (73) a. În ultima vreme te vezi prea des la televizor.  
in latest-the time you.ACC see.2SG too often on TV  
'Lately you have been seen (can be seen) too much on TV.'  
(Dobrovie-Sorin 2017: 134) În ultima vreme mă văd și eu  
in latest-the time me.ACC see.1SG also I  
la televizor.  
on TV  
'Lately I've also been seen on TV / I can also be seen on TV.'

I will argue that these examples are instances of *middle*, rather than passive *se*. Middles are conceptually passive, but syntactically anticausative, in the sense that there is no evidence for a syntactically active EA (see Schäfer 2008). Middles are used to express generalizations about the IA – the sentence is about the propensity of the subject to act as a Theme in the relevant event type, e.g. Engl. *These books sell well*. We find this type of interpretation in the examples (72)-(73): none of the examples is about an episodic event. Even if no modal is present, the reading is one of circumstantial possibility, as shown by the translations.

The tests of purpose clauses and *by*-phrases show that there is no syntactically active EA:

- (74) Ne auzim bine în această sală (\*pentru a reține fiecare cuvânt/  
us hear.1PL well in this hall for to remember every word  
\* de către oricine).  
by anybody
- (75) \* Mă văd și eu la televizor de multă lume / de către cei  
me see.1SG also I on TV by many people/ by those who watch  
care se uită după ora 12 / pentru a afla despre bolile  
after 12 o'clock for to learn about diseases-the of bones  
de oase.

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# Agreement, case and locality in the nominal and verbal domains

This book explores the Agree operation and its morphological realisations (agreement and case), specifically focusing on the connection between Agree and other syntactic dependencies such as movement, binding and control. The chapters in this volume examine a diverse set of cross-linguistic phenomena involving agreement and case from a variety of theoretical perspectives, with a view to elucidating the nature of the abstract operations that underlie them. The phenomena discussed include backward control, passivisation, progressive aspectual constructions, extraction from nominals, possessives, relative clauses and the phasal status of PPs.

