

DERIVED REFLEXIVES IN ROMANCE: THE CASE OF *SE* *

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0. Introduction

This paper investigates properties of the clitic *SE* morpheme in Italian (henceforth, It), European Portuguese (henceforth, EP), and Romanian (henceforth, R), with special emphasis on derived reflexive constructions.¹ We argue that: (i) *SE* is a monosemous and underspecified [+human] argument with a person (π) feature, (ii) *SE* lacks a [+reflexive] feature, reflexivity being epiphenomenal, and (iii) *SE* constructions do not involve thematic reduction; specifically, derived reflexives are of the type V(x,x), both syntactically and semantically.

In section 1, we discuss the paradoxical behaviour of derived reflexives in Romance. In section 2, we offer a minimalist analysis of these constructions which accounts for the paradox. Section 3 analyzes the status of emphatic reflexives and section 4 is a conclusion.

1. The paradox

It is well-known that derived reflexives force a coreferential interpretation of two distinct thematic roles associated with a predicate. In (1), *John* is both the Agent and the Patient of the verb *wash*, but note the obligatory presence of the morpheme *SE*, whether reinforced or not.

- (1) O João lavou - *(se) (a si mesmo) [EP]
 the John washed.3SG - *(SE) (to.ACC SELF same.M)
 ‘John washed himself.’

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¹ The term ‘derived reflexives’ is used to distinguish reflexive constructions derived from transitive predicates from ‘inherent reflexives’ in Romance which are intransitive pronominal verbs with no transitive counterpart (“reflexiva tantum” in Pesetsky’s 1995 terms).

Previous analyses of Romance derived reflexives can be split into two major approaches, depending on whether the morpheme/clitic *SE* is treated as a syntactic argument or as a valence reducing morpheme. Regardless of whether thematic reduction is assumed or not, there is an additional schism which refers to the merge position of the unique non-clitic argument DP: internal argument versus external argument position. As such, former approaches to reflexivization in Romance can be summarized as in (2).

- (2) **i. Argumental approach** (*SE* is a syntactic argument):
- a. Pronominal (Transitive) approach (e.g. Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, Fontana and Moore 1992, Rizzi 1986a):
- *SE* is (or binds) the internal argument (IA)
 - non-clitic DP is the external argument (EA)
- b. Unaccusative approach (e.g. Kayne 1988, McGinnis 1999, Pesetsky 1995, Sportiche 1998):
- *SE* is the external argument
 - non-clitic DP is the internal argument
- ii. Non-argumental approach** (*SE* is a valence reducing morpheme):
- a. Unaccusative approach (e.g. Bouchard 1984, Grimshaw 1990, Marantz 1984).
- non-clitic DP is the internal argument
- b. Unergative approach (e.g. Grimshaw 1982, Reinhart 1997, Reinhart and Siloni to appear)
- non-clitic DP is the external argument

The different analyses summarized in (2) reflect the idiosyncratic nature of reflexive predicates, whose behaviour cannot be readily captured by properties typical of one type of predicate only. As already noticed by Alsina (1996) and Reinhart and Siloni (to appear), reflexive constructions in Romance show an unexpected paradoxical behaviour in that they *simultaneously pattern with both unaccusative and unergative predicates*. While Alsina assumes thematic reduction, claiming that such predicates show the need “to abandon the requirement of the one-to-one match between semantic roles and syntactic expressions” (1996:3), we argue for a minimalist derivation which maintains a transitive thematic structure and provides a straightforward explanation for the ‘paradoxical’ behaviour (see section 2). However, let us first consider a few syntactic tests that highlight the hybrid nature of Romance derived reflexives.

1.1. Syntactic tests

Alsina (1996) compiles a collection of syntactic tests for Catalan and other Romance languages that point to either unaccusative or unergative behaviour of derived reflexives. With new data, we illustrate this point with two of his tests from each category and then add two more tests of our own.

First consider the unaccusative properties of reflexivized constructions. In particular, derived reflexives pattern with unaccusatives with respect to (i) auxiliary selection and (ii) embedding under causatives. For example, in Italian, reflexivized constructions, see (3a), and unaccusatives, see (3b), select the auxiliary *essere* ‘be’, whereas unergatives, see (3c), and transitives select the auxiliary *avere* ‘have’ (see also Burzio 1986, Grimshaw 1990).

- (3) a. Gianni si è perso.
Gianni SE is lost
‘Gianni has lost himself.’
- b. Gianni è arrivato.
Gianni is arrived
‘Gianni has arrived.’
- c. Gianni **ha** dormito.
Gianni has slept
‘Gianni has slept.’

In addition, when embedded under causatives, unaccusatives, see (4a), and derived reflexive predicates, see (4b), cannot delete their logical subject in Italian, whereas unergatives, see (4c), and transitives, see (4d), can (see also Burzio 1986, Rizzi 1986b, *inter alia*). Note that reflexive *SE* is also excluded here (4b).

- (4) a. Il fumo farà uscire *(la gente) dalla casa.
the smoke make.FUT exit *(the people) out.of.the house
‘The smoke will make people come out of the house.’
- b. Ho fatto travestir(*si) *(gli attori).
have.1SG made disguise(*SE) *(the actors)
‘I haven’t yet had the actors disguised.’

- c. Il maestro ha fatto lavorare molto.
 the teacher have.3SG made work much
 ‘The teacher has made people/students work a lot.’
- d. Il maestro ha fatto aprire il libro.
 the teacher have.3SG made open the book
 ‘The teacher had the book opened.’

However, derived reflexive predicates also present unergative/transitive properties which indicate that the full DP is, in fact, an external argument. Belletti (1988) and Alsina (1996) notice that only objects of transitive verbs can be realized as bare indefinite nouns, while subjects cannot. As expected, unaccusatives allow their unique argument to appear bare, see (5a), while unergatives do not, see (5b). Interestingly, the subject of derived reflexives patterns with the subject of transitive and unergative verbs, see (5c).

- (5) a. Caiem **rochas** da montanha. [EP]
 fall rocks from.the mountain
 ‘Stones are falling from the mountain.’
- b. *Trabalham **crianças**.
 work.3PL children
 ‘Children are working.’
- c. *Lavam-se **crianças** na banheira.
 wash.3PL-SE children in.the tub
 ‘Children are washing themselves in the tub.’

Furthermore, as noticed by both Alsina (1996) and Reinhart and Siloni (to appear), the full DP of derived reflexives cannot trigger *ne*-cliticization in Italian, see (6). Given that *ne*-cliticization is only triggered by internal arguments (see discussion in Burzio 1986), *due* ‘two’ in (6) has to be an external argument.²

- (6) *Se ne lavano due ai bagni pubblici
 SE of-them wash.3PL two in.the bath public
 ‘Two of them are washing themselves in the wash house.’

² Unsurprisingly, (6) is possible with a passive reading.

There are additional arguments in support of an external argument status of the unique DP in reflexives and, consequently, of unergative/transitive properties of these predicates. Consider, for instance, expletive insertion, not discussed in Alsina (1996). It is well-known that expletive associates are internal arguments. Therefore, expletive insertion is expected in passive constructions, where the subject is an internal argument; this is indeed the case, as shown in (7) where we illustrate with data from French. Furthermore, if the subject of derived reflexives were also an internal argument, the data in (7) should be ambiguous between a passive and a reflexive reading. Given that this is not the case, the reflexive reading being barred in (7) as shown, we conclude that the full DP of derived reflexives is an external argument.

- (7) Il s'est lavé plusieurs enfants.
 EXPL SE-is washed several children
 'Several children were washed.'
 '* Several children washed themselves.'

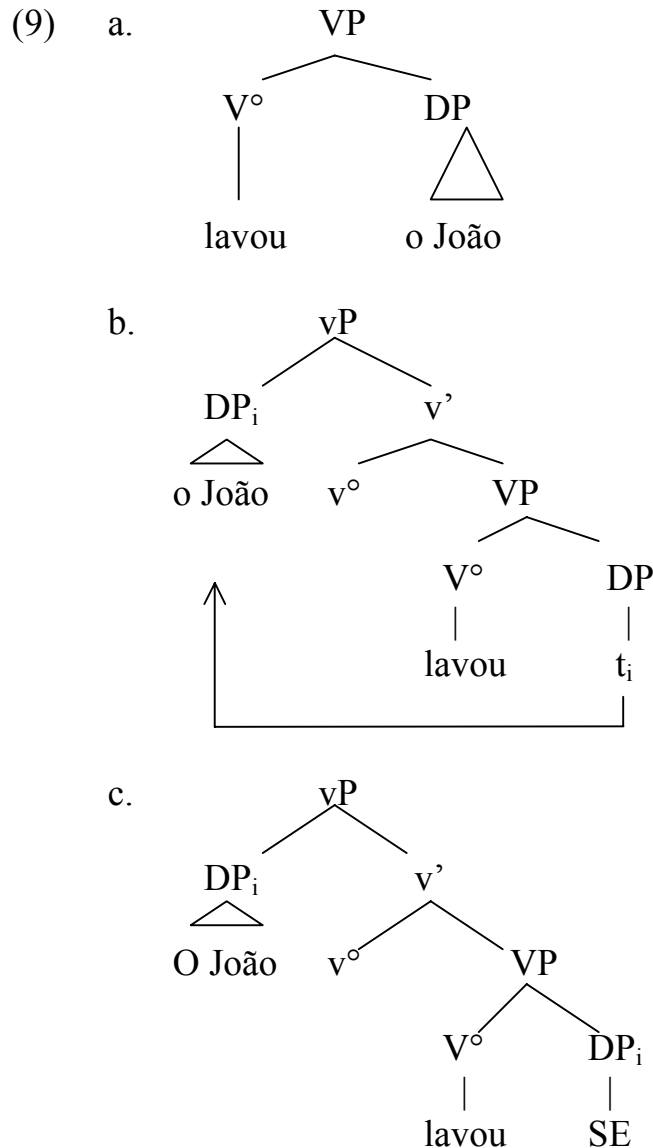
Moreover, based on agentivity, McGinnis (1999) argues for the presence of the external argument position (i.e., Spec,vP) in passives. The same argument could be used to argue for Spec,vP in derived reflexives where an agentive reading is also possible. Consider the data in (8) which confirms this.

- (8) a. S-a murdărit în mod intenționat. [R]
 SE-AUX.3SG dirtied in manner intentional
 b. Sujou-se de propósito. [EP]
 dirtied.3SG-SE of purpose
 'S/He deliberately dirtied her/himself.'

To sum up, in reflexivized constructions, the subject DP seems to behave like an external argument (recall that it resists properties associated with internal arguments) while at the same time inducing unaccusative properties. The unaccusative-like properties indicate that T enters a checking relationship with the internal argument, which is unexpected in the presence of an external argument. We propose that this apparent paradox can be explained under an analysis which views derived reflexives as transitive predicates with a single argument DP satisfying two thematic roles; specifically, if we assume a Hornstein-type analysis of reflexivization.

2. Analysis

Hornstein (1999, 2001) discusses reflexivization in English and suggests a minimalist analysis in which thematic roles are features satisfiable via movement. We illustrate this approach in (9) with the EP example in (1).



The derivation in (9) contains a single argument DP which first merges with the transitive verb in (9a) and subsequently undergoes second merge in Spec,vP for thematic purposes, see (9b). Specifically, given that the Numeration lacks an additional DP to satisfy the external/agentive theta-role, the internal DP moves to this position, thereby creating a non-trivial chain with two identical copies and two thematic roles. Hornstein further argues that both copies will have to be

pronounced to satisfy Case requirements.³ Assume further that, in Romance, the lower copy is pronounced as *SE*, thereby yielding the outcome in (9c), and bears Case relevant to the properties of the verb. Specifically, we propose that *SE* in derived reflexives is the phonological spell-out of an A-bound trace that is Accusative or Dative, as in (10).⁴

- (10) a. Mihai și-a spălat mîinile. [R]
 Mihai.NOM SE.DAT-AUX.3SG washed hands.ACC.the
 b. Mihai s-a spălat pe mîini.
 Mihai.NOM SE.ACC-AUX.3SG washed Prep.ACC hands
 ‘Mihai_i washed his_i/*_j hands.’

At least the following two questions emerge at this point: (i) what evidence is there for a movement as opposed to a binding analysis of clitic *SE*? and (ii) why is the lower copy spelled out as a ‘deficient’, underspecified argument (i.e., *SE*)?

2.1. Movement versus base-generation

The merge position of clitics is not a matter of general consensus and pronominal clitics in Romance have often been analyzed as operators base-generated in the inflectional domain from whence they bind variables in argumental positions (Burzio 1986, Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, inter alia). An analysis of *SE* as an operator would, however, not be able to account for the Italian data in (11), schematized as in (12).

- (11) a. Gianni difende sé (stesso).
 Gianni defends SE (SELF.emphatic)
 b. Gianni si difende.
 Gianni SE defend
 c. *Gianni si difende sé (stesso).
 Gianni SE defends SE (SELF.emphatic)
 ‘Gianni defends himself.’

³ It is debatable that *SE* surfaces as a Case requirement. Typically, structural case is not compulsorily discharged (e.g. transitives with propositional complements or psyche-verbs with Dat-PP but no Nominative arguments), whereas *SE* is obligatory. Rather, structural Case has bonus-like qualities which presumably reflect more meaningful language constraints, such as for example, a ‘transitivity requirement’ recently argued for by Bowers (2002) or Roberge (2002).

⁴ Note that Cinque (1988) and Dobrovie-Sorin (1998) have also argued for Case-marked *SE* on different grounds.

- (12) a. DP_i V SE (stesso)_i
 b. DP_i SE_i V
 c. * DP_i SE_i V SE (stesso)_i

Given that, in (11), the pre-verbal clitic and the post-nominal reflexive are in complementary distribution and are both equally capable of reflexivizing the predicate (i.e., have the status of “*SELF* anaphors” in Reinhart and Reuland’s terms 1993), they are clearly instances of the same *SE* argument. While the operator-variable analysis fails to account for this complementarity of distribution, the copy theory of movement adopted here provides a straightforward account.^{5,6}

2.2. Constraints on the lower copy

In section 2, we suggested that *SE* is the overt lower copy of a DP argument that satisfies two thematic roles via movement. However, this overt lower copy is cross-linguistically constrained to surface as an underspecified argument and never in its entire featural complexity, as shown in (13).

- (13) a. * Gianni_i lava Gianni_i / lui_i. [It]
 b. * O João_i viu-o_i / o João_i. [EP]
 c. * Ion_i spală pe Ion_i / el_i. [R]
 ‘*John_i washes John_i / him_i.’

While the standard assumption with regards to the data in (13) is that they represent either a Condition C or a Condition B violation, given our proposal, this cannot be maintained. If Binding Theory were assumed to affect identical copies derived via movement, EPP-type movements should also trigger Condition C effects, clearly not the case. Let us assume instead that the data in (13) is ruled out by the general condition on A-chains put forth in Reinhart and Reuland (1993), henceforth R/R93, and defined in (14).

⁵ Recall that under our analysis, the *SE* argument is not inherently a *SELF* anaphor (i.e., it lacks any inherent reflexive properties); crucially, the *SE* argument ‘reflexivizes’ the predicate by virtue of being the lower copy of a unique DP argument.

⁶ While clitic *SE* moves to the TP domain in (11b) to satisfy morphophonological requirements on the formation of phrases (for various accounts see Chomsky 1995, Kayne 1994, Uriagereka 1995), there is no movement of stressed *SE* in (11a), as in this case prosodic requirements of phrases are met due to emphasis (or extra structure).

(14) **General Condition on A-chains (R/R93)**

A maximal A-chain ($\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n$) contains exactly one link - α_1 - that is both +R and Case-marked

Given that derived reflexives contain an A-chain in which both copies are Case-marked and the higher copy (α_1) is '+R', the lower copy cannot also be '+R' and, consequently has to surface as an underspecified argument traditionally referred to as an anaphor, as in (15).

(15) John_i washed himself_i.

We next consider the mechanics for implementing the condition in (14) in derivations with reflexive predicates in Romance.

2.3. *Deriving SE from a full DP*

Following Halle and Marantz (1993), let us assume that prior to vocabulary insertion, syntactic objects that enter the derivation are just bundles of morphosyntactic/semantic features with no phonological features. After feature-checking/valuation within narrow syntax, the derivation undergoes Spell-Out and is submitted to the semantic and phonological components. It is within the phonological component that vocabulary insertion applies. Vocabulary insertion supplies phonetic content to morphemes but cannot modify the already existing feature values. While the procedure favours maximal feature match, items that are *underspecified* for the morphosyntactic feature complexes that they realize may also be inserted.

In the case of derived reflexives, say the derivation in (9), the unique DP *o João* 'John' is inserted from the Numeration with a complete set of phi-features (i.e., ϕ -complete). On its way from the internal argument to the external argument position, the DP checks phi-features on *v* and gets Accusative Case from *v* (Chomsky 1998/2000). In the external argument position, the DP further enters an Agree relationship with T and values phi-features in T (with or without pied-piping depending on language); the probe T in turn assigns Nominative Case to its goal (i.e., *o João* 'John' in Spec,vP). Given that all features have been valued, the narrow-syntactic derivation undergoes Spell-Out. However, vocabulary insertion in the phonological component has to observe the Condition on A-chains, an instance of syntax-filtered morphology. Specifically for derived reflexives, while the lower

copy is merged with phi-complete features, it cannot surface as such as this would violate the Condition on A-Chains given that both copies are valued for Case.⁷

We propose that the *SE* clitic morpheme in Romance is sufficiently underspecified to qualify as a felicitous overt lower copy in an A-chain, in accord with the condition in (14). *SE* in Romance lacks a complete set of phi-features; it is only specified for person (i.e., *me*-1SG, *te*-2SG, *se*-3SG) but not for number (i.e., *mes*-1PL, *tes*-2PL, **ses*-3PL) or gender. As such, we take *SE* to have just a person (π) feature (see also Bonet 1995, Kayne 2001, Reuland 2001), which licenses its underspecified argument status.⁸

In conclusion, *SE* being referentially defective is a suitable candidate for insertion as the lower copy of *o João* ‘John’ in (9), with the relevant π feature observed. The mechanics outlined above are schematized step-wise in (16) and (17), with copies in bold pronounced.

(16) *Output after feature-checking in narrow syntax:*

Spec,TP	EA	IA
┌──────────┐	┌──────────┐	
α	α	α
NOM		ACC
φ -complete	φ -complete	φ -complete

(17) *Vocabulary insertion after Spell-Out:*

Spec,TP	EA	IA
┌──────────┐	┌──────────┐	
O João_i	O João _i	SE_i
NOM		ACC
φ -complete	φ -complete	φ - <i>in</i> complete: π

⁷ We are not concerned here with the level of application of the condition in (14), by no means a trivial issue.

⁸ It is well-known that *SE* appears not only in reflexives (derived and/or inherent), but also in middles, unaccusatives derived from causatives, passives and impersonal constructions. Essentially, in all these constructions, there is a re-evaluation of saliency, such that the internal argument becomes more prominent than the external argument. We assume, following the Strong Monosemy Principle (Cowper, 1995) and One Form/One Meaning Principle (Johns, 1992), that there is only one lexical entry for *SE* in Romance, specified [+human] and marked for π . The underspecification of *SE* allows for its plurifunctionality (see also Embick 1998, Grimshaw 1997 inter alia). However, a detailed discussion of these constructions is beyond our present scope.

3. SELF logophors

In this section, we discuss the status of emphatics in Romance reflexive constructions and conclude that these are adjuncts and not arguments. Emphatic reflexives in Romance are phrasal constituents which can be either APs or PPs optionally containing an AP. Consider the data in (18).

- (18) a. Maria guarda [DP sé (stessa)] [It]
 Maria looks.at [DP SE (SELF.F)]
 ‘It is herself that Maria is looking at.’
- b. Gianni si lava [PP * (da) sé]. [It]
 Gianni SE washes [PP *(by.ACC) SELF]
 ‘It is himself that Gianni is washing.’
- c. O João viu-se [PP *(a) si (mesmo)] [EP]
 the John saw- SE [PP *(to.ACC) SELF (same.M)]
 ‘It is himself that John is looking at.’
- d. Victor se spală [PP *(pe) sine (însuși)] [R]
 Victor SE washes [PP *(Prep.ACC)SELF (in.SELF.SG.M.)]
 ‘It is himself that Victor is washing.’
- e. [DP Victor (însuși)] se spală. [R]
 [DP Victor (in.SELF.SG.M.)] SE washes
 ‘It is Victor himself that is washing (himself).’

Notice that, in Romanian, the emphatic AP modifies the subject DP (18e) or the noun phrase within the emphatic PP associated with the internal argument position (18d), depending on whether emphasis is placed on the Agent or Patient, respectively.⁹ In all three languages, these APs inflect for phi-features identical to those of the unique argument DP.

Semantically, emphatics mark contrastive focus (i.e., the “focus logophors” of R/R93). Since no more than one XP can be contrastively focused in a sentence, no more than one such emphatic can appear in the argument structure of a predicate, see (19).

⁹ The availability of emphatics for both Agent and Patient further reinforces the claim that derived reflexives are structurally transitive.

- (19) a. * [DP Ion însuși] se spală [PP pe sine însuși]. [R]
 b. * [DP Gianni stesso] lava [DP sé stesso]. [It]
 ‘* It is John himself that it is himself that is washing.’

Syntactically, while APs are clearly adjuncts, the status of the PP emphatics is less clear. In principle, these could be either adjuncts or arguments. However, there are various syntactic diagnostics that show that reflexive emphatics are *not* argumental in Romance. First, these emphatics fail to reflexively mark the predicate, see data in (20) which is ungrammatical in the absence of *SE*.

- (20) a. Ion *(se) spală **pe sine**. [R]
 b. O João lavou-*(se) **a si mesmo**. [EP]
 ‘It is himself that Victor is washing.’

Consequently, these PP emphatics are SELF logophors, specifically instances of non-argumental SELF anaphors (R/R93).

Second, extraction phenomena indicates emphatic PPs behave like adjuncts. Cinque (1990), Schütze (1995), and Hornstein (2001) discuss various extraction diagnostics to determine the adjunct versus argument status of syntactic phrases. Here, we show that extraction of SELF logophors out of factive (21a) and interrogative (21b) weak islands is barred. The inability of these logophors to extract out of weak islands confirms their adjunct status.

- (21) a. * Pe sine regret că s-a murdărit Mihai. [R]
 Prep.ACC SELF regret that SE-AUX.3SG dirtied Mihai
 ‘Himself I regret that Mihai got dirty.’
- b. *Da sé mi chiedevo perché Gianni si
 by SELF me asked why Gianni SE
 stesse lavando. [It]
 was washing
 ‘Himself I wondered why Gianni had washed.’

4. Conclusions

In this paper we have argued that derived reflexives are transitive verbs for which a unique DP satisfies two thematic roles via movement. We further claimed that *SE* is a monosemous argument with π features, while emphatic reflexives are adjuncts. Such an analysis captures the apparent unaccusative/unergative paradox, as it is no longer surprising that a predicate whose sole DP functions as both an

internal and an external argument will exhibit properties of both types of predicates. In addition, as the phonological spell-out of the copy of the sole DP available in the derivation, *SE* lacks inherent reflexive properties. Reflexivity, then, is epiphenomenal (see also Reuland, 2001; Déchaine & Wiltschko, 2002).

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