Romanian *se*-verbs: how much we can unify and how much is to be assigned to the lexicon

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Like in the other Romance languages, the so-called "*se*-verbs" (verbs accompanied by clitic pronouns from the accusative reflexive paradigm) have a variety of uses in Romanian – reflexive, reciprocal, anticausative (also called 'inchoative'), middle, passive, impersonal (see GALR, Cornilescu 1998, Dobrovie-Sorin 2006, forth.), plus some minor types which have not been much discussed in the literature (with symmetrical predicates and with psych-verbs); moreover, there are verbs which must always be accompanied by *se*-clitics (the so-called 'inherent *se*-verbs'). This complex picture raises two important questions: (i) To which extent can we provide a unitary analysis of *se* in all these uses? and (ii) How can we analyze inherent *se*-verbs, given the fact that *se* is not an affix, but an independent syntactic item (a clitic that can be separated from the lexical verb, occurring before auxiliaries and even before semi-lexical verbs, in restructuring contexts, e.g. *ce se poate întâmpla* 'what SE can happen', from the inherent reflexive *se întâmpla* 'happen')?

1. *Se* as an accusative pronoun. As already mentioned, *se* has the distributional behavior of a (clitic) pronoun. However, since its various uses are related to voice phenomena, and in other Romance languages even reflexive/reciprocal *se*-verbs show some intransitive properties, it has often been analyzed as a Voice (or voice-related) functional head (see Sportiche 1996, Labelle 2008). Against this, I will argue that the accusative pronoun is the best analysis, being able to cover all uses except the impersonal one (and also the passive one, if we treat impersonal and passive *se* as the same thing in Romanian, see Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, 2006). The main arguments for this are the following:

(i) In the reflexive use, there is evidence for two distinct arguments (EA and IA). The Voice-head analysis resorts to a valency-reduction or a theta-bundling operation (extended even to theta-roles which do not come from the same predicate, in order to cover ECM cases such as *El se consideră deștept* 'He considers himself intelligent'; see Labelle 2008). However, in constructions with focal particles and comparative deletion, *se* can have a *strict* reading (i.e., co-reference with the EA instead of variable bound by the EA), which can only be analyzed as involving two distinct arguments:

(1)   A: Câți or fi votat pentru tine? 'How many people might have voted for you?'
      B: Cred   că doar eu m-am   votat
         think.1SG that only I   *se*.1SG-have.1 voted   'I think only I voted for myself.'
         = I voted for **me** and no other *x* is such that *x* voted for **me**

(2)   A tot   primit laude, pe urmă și el s-a   lăudat, în discursul   lui
      he on-and-on received praises then   also he *se*-has praised in discourse-the his
      'He received a lot of praises, then he praised himself too...' (*too* → and others praised **him**)

(3)   Eu mă apăr   mai bine decât avocatul   pe   care l-am   angajat.
      I me defend more well than lawyer-the DOM which CL.ACC-have.1 hired
      'I defend myself better than the lawyer I hired.' = than the lawyer defends **me**

The presence of two argument positions is also obvious when *se* doubles a strong anaphor.

(ii) The clearly non-argumental uses of *se*, such as the anticausative one, are not restricted to languages where *se* is a clitic (which as such could be analyzed as a functional head or an affix attached to some functional head, excorporating in climbing contexts, see Roberts 2010): in German, *sich* is a non-clitic pronoun and yet has an anticausative use (see Schäfer 2008, a.o.).

2. *Se* in anticausatives. An analysis of the verbs showing causative/unaccusative pairs clearly shows two things: (i) *se*-anticausatives are a productive type, the default way of creating the unaccusative pair for a verbal concept for which an Agent/Causer role is optional; thus, they cannot be treated as inherent verbs, as in traditional grammars (see GALR); (ii) *se* is productively used only for unaccusatives alternating with causatives, not for unaccusatives in general. Evidence for these points comes from an examination of the inventory of Romanian unaccusative verbs in Dragomirescu (2010), which reveals that 93% of alternating verbs have a *se*-anticausative (only 7% have an unmarked anticausative, and 5% have both an unmarked and a *se*- version), whereas in non-alternating verbs, only 25% show *se* (inherent reflexives) and 7% show both *se* and an unmarked version, the majority (68%) being unmarked. With alternating verbs showing both an unmarked and a *se*-version, the *se*-version is regularly associated to the causative version, whereas the unmarked version has meanings for which absence of an external cause is predominant (Levin & Rappaport Hovav's (1995) 'internally caused' change-of-state verbs): thus, from *slab* 'weak, thin': *slăbi* (trans.) 'to loosen, to weaken', *se*

slăbi 'to get loosen' but *slăbi* (intrans.) 'to grow thin'; the antonym *îngrăşa* 'to fatten' only has a *se*-marked inchoative, *se îngrăşa* 'to grow fat', which may be related to the frequent causative use of *îngrăşa* for animals; from *albi* 'to make white', the unmarked inchoative is mostly used for the hair ('to grow grey'), from *înverzi* 'to make green', the unmarked inchoative is only used for plants, etc.

The analysis I adopt follows the main insights in Schäfer (2008), Alexiadou et al. (2015): (i) *se* is a pronoun with unvalued φ-features, which are valued via agreement with the subject, mediated by verbal functional heads; (ii) two-place reflexives are regular transitive configurations, marked anticausatives involve a Voice with no thematic EA. Alexiadou et al. (2015) propose that in anticausatives *se* is an expletive merged in SpecVoice. This does not explain why such a pronoun is needed and why it is marked accusative (accusative marking is seen as reflecting dependent case, for which it is assumed that it is not assigned to the lower unmarked DP, as in the standard formulation stemming from Marantz 1991, but rather to the DP which has not valued the φ-features of Tense). Instead, I propose that the role of *se* is to discharge V's accusative feature (for *se* as an accusative absorber, see Pesetsky 1995, McGinnis 1997, Embick 2004, Reinhart & Siloni 2005, a.o.). Instead of a Voice which takes an expletive specifier, I assume a Voice with no EA but with an accusative assignment property, which I represent as selection of an AgrOP; AgrOP is situated between VoiceP and VP and its specifier hosts objects raised from subject positions in so-called ECM constructions (for similar proposals, see Bowers 1993: PredP-TransP-VP, and Pesetsky & Torrego 2004: v*P-T$_o$P-VP). In this approach, Burzio's generalization is captured by imposing that a probing AgrO is selected by Voice* (the Voice that takes a thematic specifier). I rephrase Alexiadou et al.'s expletive Voice as a Voice that takes no specifier but selects 'expletive AgrO'. The accusative pronoun is hosted in the Spec of expletive AgrO, a standard object position, and its features are valued via feature sharing with AgrO and inclusion of AgrO in a (T)-Voice-AgrO-IA agreement chain:

(4)   a. [$_{VoiceP}$ EA Voice^0$_{+External-Role +D}$ [$_{AgrOP}$ (O) AgrO [$_{VP}$ (O) V (O)]]]   (transitives)
      b. [$_{VoiceP}$ Voice^0 [$_{AgrOP}$ **[D(P)uφ]** AgrO [$_{VP}$ (IA) V (IA)]]]   (marked anticausatives)
      c. [$_{VP}$ (IA) V (IA)]   (unmarked anticausatives)
      d. [$_{PassP}$ Pass [$_{VoiceP}$ Voice$_{+External-Role}$ [$_{VP}$ (IA) V (IA)]]]   (passives, cf. Bruening 2013)

The systematic use of *se-* in alternating verbs in Romanian, as opposed to English, is captured by a generalization over the lexicon: (5)   If a verb has a Theme role, it is [+trans]

[+trans] means that it must project VoiceP. Indeed, alternating verbs seem to always require an object, at least an implicit one, in their transitive use (e.g. *??Ion îngraşă* 'Ion fattens'), so they always have Theme. For verbal concepts which require Theme and have an optional Causer/Agent role, the only way of building an environment with no Causer/Agent is to project the structure in (4)b, i.e., an expletive O. Alternating verbs with an unmarked anticausative are marked in the lexicon, as exceptions to the rule in 0, or with a special entry, if there are meaning differences. *Se*-marked non-alternating unaccusatives have no EA but a [trans] feature, which has a historical explanation. The analysis of anticausatives also covers middles, which are syntactically anticausative (Schäfer 2008).

3. One-place reflexives. Cross-linguistic comparison suggests that some reflexives uses may rely on one-place entries where role bundling takes indeed place, e.g. the so-called naturally verbs (*wash, dress, shave*, Ro. *se spăla, se îmbrăca, se rade* etc.). But since two-place uses are always available here, the tests are not reliable. However, there is a different class for which a one-place configuration is conceptually justified, and whose subject is nevertheless agentive, excluding an anticausative analysis: these are self-motion verbs, called 'autocausative' in Geniušienė (1987), both atelic (e.g. *se târî* 'to crawl' (transitive: 'to drag'), *se mişca* 'to move', *se agita* 'to fret', *se legăna* 'to swing') and telic (e.g. *se opri* 'to stop', *se ridica* 'to rise, get up', *se întinde* 'to stretch (oneself), lie down', *se apleca* 'to bend'); self-controlled movement of the agent implies that the agent also suffers a change (of the position of the body or its parts, of the motion itself, etc.). It is this change that is foregrounded in the reflexive use. These 'reflexives' never allow strict readings and may show special meanings in the reflexive use. I analyze them as involving a Voice with a thematic external argument and a theta-bundling property; this requires that the IA position is not saturated. Since these verbs are [+trans], this can only be achieved via SE, which, due to its unvalued features, may be interpreted, in SpecAgrO, as a lambda-abstractor over the IA position (cf. Landau's 2015 similar proposal for PRO).

4. Inherent *se*-verbs and minor classes. I show that most inherent *se*-verbs can be analyzed either as anticausatives or as one-place reflexives (the latter type covers the large number of so-called 'dynamic *se*-verbs', e.g. *se lăfăi* 'to sprawl, *se strădui* 'to strive', *se mocăi* 'to dawdle', *se hlizi* 'to giggle'). I will

show that, similar to one-place reflexives, there are one-place reciprocals, which came to follow the pattern of symmetric predicates (e.g. *se bate* 'beat (one another)' → *se bate **cu*** 'fight **with**').