

The formal properties of non paradigmatic SE

Javier Ormazabal^{1 2} & Juan Romero³

[Draft: April , 2017]

1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to analyze the role of SE in non-paradigmatic *SE* constructions in Spanish. Specifically, we deal with impersonal (1a) and passive (1b) *SE* constructions as described in Mendikoetxea (1999) and other works.

- (1) a. Se dejó a las mujeres maltratadas sin protección efectiva
SE left.sg A the women abused without protection effective
'Abused women were left without effective protection'
b. Se dejaron las reivindicaciones de los trabajadores en un cajón
SE left.pl the demands of the workers in a drawer
'The workers' demands were left aside'

In Standard Spanish, the key difference between (1a) and (1b) lies in verbal agreement. Thus while in the so-called *SE impersonal* construction (1a) number agreement with the complement *a las mujeres maltratadas* is not possible (2a), in so-called *SE passive* constructions agreement between the verb and its complement is mandatory (1b)-(2b).

- (2) a. *Se dejaron a las mujeres maltratadas sin protección efectiva
SE left.pl A the women abused without protection effective
'Abused women were left without effective protection'
b. *Se dejó las reivindicaciones de los trabajadores en un cajón
SE left.sg the demands of the workers in a drawer
'The workers' demands were left aside'

It is precisely because of this contrast that it is generally assumed that the complement in (1b) raises to subject position, while the complement in (1a) stays in object position, where it receives Differential Object Marking (DOM) (Rivero 2002). Analyses differ regarding the structural details of these relations, but there is a broad consensus in the literature that (1a) and (1b) are instances of different constructions.

In this paper, we update a proposal already anticipated by Oca (1914) who suggested that the clitic SE is the subject of the sentence. We propose a unified derivation of SE-passives and SE-impersonals as regular active constructions where SE is the nominative subject. The "nominative SE" hypothesis has been argued for "impersonal" SE in (1a) by many authors before us (e.g. Cinque 1988; see D'Alessandro (2007), ch. 2 for a comprehensive revision of the literature in this regard), but extending it to "passive" SE, as we do, has been very uncommon. We also argue that the characteristic properties of the constructions and their differences derive from the interaction of Case theory and the "quirky" nature of SE as the subject of the construction; specifically, its lack of person and number ϕ features.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2 we go through some of the more characteristic properties attributed in the literature to non paradigmatic SE constructions in Spanish, and we check whether these properties are compatible with the idea that SE is actually a nominative subject. In section 3, on the other hand, we test the predictions made by this hypothesis, and we show that evidence strongly supports it.

¹University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), <javier.ormazabal@ehu.eus>

²Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT)

³University of Extremadura (UNEX), <juantxo.romero@gmail.com>

2. General properties of passive and impersonal *SE* constructions

In this section we analyze the main distinctive properties of *SE* constructions discussed in the literature, most explicitly organized in Mendikoetxea (1999), Sánchez (2002) and *NGLE*, and we complete the standard discussion of control with obviation tests and add new observations concerning the behavior of *SE* constructions in pseudo relatives. We show that these properties are not only compatible with our proposal, but that they actually support it in a remarkably straightforward way.

2.1. Agreement patterns

The general agreement situation in *SE* constructions in the case of non transitive verbs is for Tense to appear in third person singular, arguably, a default form (3).

- (3) a. En esta empresa se **trabaja** sin descanso
In this company SE **work.3sg** without rest
'In this company people work restlessly'
b. Se **anduvo** hasta el cruce
SE **walked.3sg** until the crossing
'People walked until the junction'
c. Se **llega** antes por aquí
SE **arrive.3sg** earlier by here
'You arrive earlier this way'

With transitive verbs, cross-linguistic and dialectal variation among Romance languages and dialects is considerable (for data and discussion see D'Alessandro 2007). In Standard Spanish there are two possibilities: on the one hand, in those contexts where the object must receive DOM (4a)-(4b), the verbal complex appears in the default 3rd person form (4c)-(4d), as in (3).

- (4) a. *Se asustaron los niños
SE frighten.**pl** the children
b. *se asustó los niños
SE frighten.**sg** the children
c. *se asustaron a los niños
SE frighten.**pl** DOM the children
d. se asustó a los niños
SE frighten.**sg** DOM the children
'The children were frightened'

On the other hand, when the object cannot be marked for DOM (5a)-(5b), the verb triggers number agreement with it (5c)-(5d) (observe the contrast between (4c) and (5c)).

- (5) a. *Se tiraron a las colillas al suelo
SE threw.away.**pl** DOM the cigarette butts to.the floor
b. *Se tiró a las colillas al suelo
SE threw.away.**sg** DOM the cigarette butts on.the floor
c. Se tiraron las colillas al suelo
SE threw.away.**pl** the cigarette butts to.the floor
d. *Se tiró las colillas al suelo
SE threw.away.**sg** the cigarette butts on.the floor
'The cigarette butts were thrown away on the the floor'

This description does not honor dialectal variation, but it corresponds to the standard description of the phenomenon, and it accurately describes the dialects of the authors (Central and Basque Spanish).

It is important to note that what is relevant for agreement is DOM, not the properties of the DP. So, in those cases where DOM is assigned to secondary predicates (6a,b) or infinitival subjects (6c) (see Ormazabal & Romero 2013), the verb cannot express number agreement. On the other hand, when

an animate object does not receive DOM, it must agree (7) (but see Ordóñez & Treviño 2016 for some observations in Mexican Spanish).

- (6) a. se dejó/*dejaron sin hojas a todos los árboles del parque
SE left.sg/pl without leaves DOM the trees
b. se llama/*llaman a estas obras novelas
SE call.sg/pl DOM these literary.works romans
c. se vio/*vieron a los aviones estrellarse contra la montaña
SE saw.sg/pl DOM the planes to.crash against the mountain
- (7) se traían /*traía niños para cubrir las bajas
SE brought.pl/sg children to replace casualties

As we argue in section 3, this agreement pattern follows naturally from our proposal if, as generally assumed, SE lacks number features. As in other quirky case environments (e.g. Icelandic) default agreement is obtained unless a suitable DP checks number agreement (see, for instance, Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008, and section 3.1). In such contexts the number-agreeing DP does not need to be the subject of the clause. In fact, as we will show next, this element continues to be the VP internal argument in *SE*-passive constructions in Spanish.

2.2. A non-overt argument is always needed

As observed in the literature (Mendikoetxea 1999, Sánchez 2002, and references therein for discussion and examples), non-paradigmatic *SE* constructions are compatible with almost all types of verbs: transitive, unaccusative, unergative, ditransitive, psych verbs, alternating verbs (locative, dative, causative-inchoative, etc.), propositional verbs, etc.; even, under certain circumstances, raising verbs (as we discuss in section 3.2 below).

However, from the point of view of the argument structure, there is a general constraint against *SE* constructions:⁴ They are not available with argumentless verbs, typically atmospheric ones (*llover* ‘to rain’, *atardecer* ‘to get dark’ etc.), as the example in (8) illustrates.

- (8) (*se) llueve
SE rain.sg
Intended: ‘It’s raining’

The following contrast in (9) is interesting because, as indicated in the translation, (9a) is ambiguous. However, only the first meaning (‘x smells like a rose’) is available in the *SE* construction (9b):

- (9) a. Huele a rosas
Smells like roses

⁴ There are at least two other general restrictions. One of them has to do with the animacy requirement of the subjects and is discussed in sec. 2.4; the second one affects constructions where there is another obligatory source for *SE* in addition to the impersonal one, including inherently *SE*-marked verbs (i), the anticausative use of transitive alternations (ii), and reflexive constructions with *SE* (iii), among others:

- (i) a. *se se arrepiente de sus pecados
b. *Se se desmaya cada vez que la ve
- (ii) a. El niño *(se) perdió/hirió cuando volvía a casa
The child SE lost/wound.3sg when returned to home
‘The child got lost/hurt himself when he was coming back home’
b. *Se se perdió/hirió cuando volvía a casa
SE SE lost/wound.3sg when returned to home
- (iii) a. Juan se veía en medio de una terrible depresión
Juan SE was.seeing in middle of a terrible depression
‘Juan could see himself in the middle of a terrible depression’
b. *Se se veía en medio de una terrible depresión
SE SE was.seeing in middle of a terrible depression

The impossibility of *SE-SE* combinations is not a trivial matter and raises interesting questions related to both morphology and syntax, but those issues are beyond the scope of this paper and will be left aside here (see Burzio 1986, Cinque 1995, Martins & Nunes 2016, to appear, and references for discussion).

- ‘(S)he smells like roses’
 ‘There is a rose smell’
 b. Se huele a rosas
 se smells like roses
 ‘Someone/Everybody smells like roses’

Thus, the distribution of *SE*-constructions is exactly what is predicted if *SE* stands for the higher argument: In those cases where *V*'s theta grid lacks any argument, there is no position where *SE* can be inserted, and, in consequence, a non paradigmatic *SE* construction cannot be generated.

2.3. Infinitive control and subjunctive obviation

A second property of *SE*-constructions that supports the presence of a syntactically active subject is that they show the same obligatory control/disjoint reference distribution as in infinitive/subjunctive alternations of any other regular active sentences. The minimal pair in (10) illustrates that in Spanish:

- (10) a. Los trabajadores intentaron enviar un representante a la reunión
 The workers tried to.send a representative to the meeting
 'The workers tried to send a representative to the meeting'
 b. Los trabajadores intentaron que enviara(n) un representante a la reunión
 The workers tried that send.SUBJ.sg/pl a representative to the meeting
 'The workers tried for her/him/them (≠ the workers) to send a representative to the meeting'

(10a) is a regular infinitival structure with *intentar* ('try'), where the subject of the embedded infinitival construction must be obligatorily controlled by the matrix subject *los trabajadores* ('the workers'). As is well known, if the embedded infinitival construction is substituted by a subjunctive complement (10b), the subject of that subjunctive clause must be referentially disjoint from the main subject *los trabajadores* ('the workers'). This disjoint reference effect between the two subjects is characteristic of Romance subjunctive constructions with volitional verbs and some other types of predicates like *decidir* 'decide', *intentar* 'try', *proponer* 'propose', etc. Given that, consider now the minimal pair of *se* constructions in (11).

- (11) a. Se intentó enviar unos representantes a la reunión
 SE tried.sg to.send a representative to the meeting
 'They (generic, indefinite) tried to send a representative to the meeting'
 b. Se intentó que enviaran unos representantes a la reunión
 SE decided.sg that send.SUBJ.pl some representatives to the meeting
 'They (generic, indefinite) tried for x (x ≠ them) to send some representatives to the meeting'

In (11a), the infinitival subject must be controlled by the matrix "implicit" argument of the *SE* constructions, whatever its generic/indefinite interpretation is. In contrast, the subject of the subjunctive complement in (11b) must be disjoint in reference from the "implicit" argument of the matrix clause.

Notice also that, in contrast, control/obviation context are highly degraded in analytical passives in minimal pair structures:

- (12) a * (Allí) fue decidido enviar un representante a la reunión
 (There) was decided to.send a representative to the meeting
 b * (Allí) fue decidido que enviara un representante a la reunión
 There was decided that send.SUBJ a representative to the meeting

These facts are, again, completely in line with our proposal. As far as there is a subject in the matrix clause, as we propose *SE* is, the subject of the embedded clause can have conjoint or disjoint reference with it, and, in consequence, it is expected to have a conjoint subject with infinitives (11a), and a disjoint one with subjunctive mood (11b).⁵

⁵ Given the fact that these verbs require a propositional complement, passive *SE* constructions cannot be tested. However, sentences as (11a) behave as clitic climbing structures regarding subject agreement (i):

(i) se intentaron enviar a la reunión (= it was tried to send them to the meeting)

2.4. The “missing” argument is always animate

There is an important property that has been interpreted in different ways in the literature but, considered in a broader context, supports the analysis of *SE* as the pronominal argument occupying the subject position in the constructions under discussion. We are referring to the well observed fact that the missing argument always has an animate interpretation (Mendikoetxea 1999, Sánchez 2002, and references therein). Consider, for instance, change of state verbs. This kind of verbs typically allow animate agents as well as non-animate causes as subjects in their transitive version (13a). When they enter into a non paradigmatic *SE*-construction, the cause loses the ability to refer to an inanimate entity.

- (13) a. El fuego/pyrómano quemó muchos libros/a muchos inocentes aquella noche
The fire/pyromaniac burned many books/ A many innocents that night
'The fire/the pyromaniac burned many books/many innocent people that night'
- b. Se quemaron muchos libros aquella noche
SE burned-3pl many books that night
'Many books were burned that night' (animate generic agent only)
- c. Se quemó a muchos inocentes aquella noche
SE burned-3sg many innocents that night
'Many innocent people were burned that night' (animate generic/arbitrary agent only)

This restriction equally affects passive (13b) and impersonal (13c) constructions. This property has, at least, two important consequences: On the one hand, it sharply distinguishes "passive" *SE* from analytic passives, where inanimate causers are perfectly fine (14).

- (14) Muchos libros fueron quemados/destruídos por el fuego aquella noche
Many books were burnt/destroyed by the fire that night

On the other hand, the animacy restriction makes *SE* constructions incompatible with verbs that do not select animate arguments (e.g., *ocurrir* 'to happen', *transcurrir* 'to pass', *rielar* 'to shimmer (the moon)' (15)), making the distribution of *SE* closer to the one of strong pronouns.

- (15) a. *se/*él ocurre /implica que...
SE/he happens/implies that...
- b. *se/*él transcurrió (un día)
SE/he passed (one day)

Many impersonal constructions share this property with *SE*-constructions (Fernández-Soriano & Taboas 1999). As a matter of fact, it has been argued that this requirement is a general property of arbitrary/generic subjects (e.g. Cinque 1988). However, this statement is not completely accurate. It is true that arbitrary/generic subjects tend to be animate in many such contexts,⁶ but when verbs that generally take inanimate subjects are considered, the generic interpretation is also available for many inanimate implicit arguments, as illustrated in the contrast between (16a) and (16b).

- (16) a. Al PRO ser expresamente recopilados para la enciclopedia, los datos adquieren una importancia especial
'Being specifically collected for the encyclopedia, data acquire a special importance'.
- b. #Cuando se es expresamente recopilado para la enciclopedia, se adquiere una importancia especial
When SE is collected specifically for the encyclopedia...
Intended: 'When something is collected for the encyclopedia, it acquires a special importance.'

⁶ Observe that generic properties are necessarily restricted: we can make generic statement about *lions* or *comets*, but is hard to conceive a property that can be attributed to everything in a generic fashion. Arbitrary and generic readings are easy to obtain with animate *null* nouns because their reference, human beings, is morphosyntactically marked as such, as shown, for instance, by DOM. Non animate null arguments, on the other hand, encompass all the objects in the world: What property can plausibly be shared by everything?

It does not matter how easy to obtain an inanimate lecture is, the result is completely ungrammatical with non paradigmatic SE constructions (17).⁷

- (17) a. #Al rotarse de manera regular, sabemos que el peso está equilibrado
When rotating SE in a regular fashion, we know the weight is balanced
b. #Que se tenga demasiada resolución conlleva gastar demasiada energía
That SE having too much resolution implies to spend too much energy
'Having too much resolution implies heavy energy consumption'
c. #En esta pajarería se come mucho alpiste
In this pet.shop SE eat.3sg a.lot canary.grass
"In this pet shop a lot of canary grass is eaten" (only possible if it is eaten by people)
d. #Aquí, si se es rugoso, se sobra (=si la tela es rugosa, sobra)
Here, if SE is rough, SE is left over (if the fabric is rough, it is left over)

As suggested above, the distribution of the facts makes SE close to strong pronouns in Spanish. In fact, the animacy restriction systematically puts together impersonal constructions with 2nd or 3rd person agreement (Fernández-Soriano & Taboas 1999), and *se* in SE constructions, differentiating it from impersonal silent/implicit arguments in infinitival constructions (16a) or middle sentences (see sec. 3.4). That strongly suggests that the animate/non-animate distinction in impersonal sentences falls squarely within Montalbetti's generalization, which establishes that overt pronouns entering into agreement relations obligatorily have animate interpretation. Thus, for instance, in subject position (18a,b), the pronoun *ella* can only refer to *her*, but as a P complement it can both refer to *her* and to (feminine) *it* (18c).

- (18) a. La niña cayó ↔ ella cayó
The girl fell she fell
b. La silla cayó ↔ *ella cayó
The chair fell it_{fem} fell
c. Salió sin la silla/la niña ↔ salió sin ella
Get.out.3sS without the chair/the girl ↔ get.out.3sS without it_{fem}/her
'(S)he left without the chair/the child/' '... without the chair/the child/'it/her'

Similarly, what the distribution of facts in this sections indicates is that impersonals with overt first and second or third person pronouns and, crucially for us, *se* in SE constructions also fall within the same group inducing Montalbetti animacy effects; as opposed to silent pronominal arguments, which do not. In section 3.1 we will come back to a possible syntactic explanation for Montalbetti's generalization; for the time being, the important point is that if SE is an overt subject pronoun, as we propose, the fact that its interpretation must be animate can be assimilated to the parallel behavior of other pronominal elements.

2.5. SE constructions have active morphology and active syntax

⁷ Compare examples in (17) with the perfectly grammatical ones in (i). Other examples with generic readings can be easily construed with verbs selecting inanimate arguments:

- (i) a. (el estudio del cosmos) nos muestra que es posible PRO rotar sin perder el eje
(the study of cosmos) 1sD show.3s that is possible PRO to.rotate without losing the axis
b. Al PRO rotar de manera regular, sabemos que un planeta puede albergar vida
When to.rotate in a regular way, know.1p that a planet can harbor life
c. PRO Tener demasiada resolución conlleva gastar demasiada energía
To.have too.many resolution implies to.consume too.many energy
d. La teoría ontológica nos dice que si ocurre, PRO debe existir.
The theory ontological 1pD says that if happens, PRO must exist

These examples are construed with verbs selecting inanimate or mostly inanimate arguments. In (17a)-(ia), the verb *rotar*, 'rotate', takes usually a very specific set of arguments: those characterized for having a regular geometry, what makes them capable of doing a regular spin on an axis. Since the argument is so restricted, it is easy to make generic statements with inanimate interpretation. This fact is even more clearly shown by *ocurrir* in (id), a predicate that cannot take animate subjects.

From the point of view of voice morphology, both *SE* impersonal and *SE* passive constructions are active sentences (Rivero 2002). As shown in (19a)-(20a), the verb has exactly the same form as in their regular active pairs (19b)-(20b):

- (19) a. En ese país se asesina a los opositores
In this country SE assassinate.sg A the opposing
'In this country, dissidents are assassinated'
- b. En este país el ejército asesina a los opositores
In this country the army assassinate.sg A the opposing
'In this country, the army assassinates the dissidents'
(cfr. los opositores SON asesinADOS 'dissidents are assassinated')
- (20) a. En ese país se censuran las iniciativas políticas
In this country SE censor.pl the initiative political
'In this country the political initiatives are censored'
- b. En ese país las instituciones censuran las iniciativas políticas
In this country the SE institutions censor.pl the initiative political
'In this country, the institutions censor the political initiatives'
(cfr. las iniciativas SON censurADAS, 'initiatives are censored')

Furthermore, this construction is compatible with any kind of verbal complement, crucially including those that reject analytic passive constructions. For instance, complements of the verb *tener* ('to have') in (21) and measurement complements such as (22) and (23) cannot passivize, but they may appear in "passive" *se* constructions with no restriction (but see Ordóñez & Treviño 2011).

- (21) a. María tiene tres hijos / los últimos modelos de Ferrari
María has three children / the last models of Ferrari
'María has three children / the latest Ferraris'
- b. *Tres hijos / *los últimos ferraris son tenidos (por María)
Three children / the latest Ferrari are had (by María)
- c. cuando se tienen tres hijos / los últimos modelos de Ferrari...
when SE have.3pl three children / the last models of Ferrari
- (22) a. María corrió cien metros
María run one.hundred meters
'María run one hundred meters'
- b. *Cien metros fueron corridos
One.hundred meters were run
- c. se corrieron cien metros
Se run.3pl one.hundred meters
- (23) a. El niño pesa cincuenta kilos
The kid weights fifty kilos
- b. *Cincuenta kilos son pesados por el niño
Fifty kilos are weighted by the kid
- c. Si se pesan cincuenta kilos⁸
If SE weighted.pl fifty kilos

Not only that, *SE* passives are compatible even with analytical passives:

- (24) a. En ese país, cuando se es opositor, se es asesinado
In this country, when SE is opposing, SE is assassinated
'In this country, when you are a dissident you are assassinated'
- b. En este país, el opositor es asesinado
In this country, the opposing is assassinated
'In this country, dissidents are assassinated'

⁸ For some speakers (including one of the authors of this paper), both (23c) and (24c) are possible, even better, without agreement: *se corrió cien metros, se pesó cincuenta kilos*.

One could argue that passive *SE* constructions are “a different kind of passivization”, but a transformation not subject to any constraint would be almost a unique situation, specially when we consider cases such as (22)-(23), where it is not even clear that accusative Case can be assigned,⁹ and, in consequence, it is hard to see how a voice transformation may proceed, how it may be triggered. Moreover, as shown in (19a), and in contrast to (24a), in *se* constructions DOM is assigned as in regular active transitive sentences (see also section 2.1, and Rivero 2002).

Altogether, this makes the “passive” hypothesis of *se* constructions with transitive inanimate objects implausible. Quite to the contrary, *SE* constructions are regular active sentences with *SE* in subject position, as proposed. Nothing exceptional happens at the VP-internal level except for the well-known agreement patterns to which we will return in section 3.

2.6. *SE* must be in a Nominative Case position: the case of infinitives

It has also been observed that *SE* is incompatible with those infinitives that do not license nominative subjects, but allowed in infinitival constructions where overt subjects are licensed (Cinque 1988; Mendikoetxea 1999). The contrast between (25) and (26) present minimal pairs with infinitival and tensed subjunctive complements, and (27) is a case of prepositional infinitives allowing overt pronominal subjects. In all cases, *SE* and personal pronouns behave the same way:

- (25) a. *Es mejor descubrir-se a la culpable
Is better to.discover-SE DOM the culprit
b. *Es mejor descubrir yo al culpable
Is better to.discover I DOM the culprit
- (26) a. Es mejor que se descubra al culpable
Is better that SE discover.3sgSUBJUNCTIVE DOM.the culprit
'It's better that the culprit be discovered'
b. Es mejor que yo descubra al culpable
Is better that I discover.1sgSUBJUNCTIVE DOM.the culprit
'It's better that (if) I discover the culprit'
- (27) a. Al descubrir-se al culpable
At.the discover-SE DOM.the culprit
'When the culprit was discovered'
b. Al descubrir yo al culpable
At.the discover I DOM.the culprit
'When I discovered the culprit'

This contrast fits particularly well in our proposal, provided that the overt pronoun *se* is a regular pronominal subject that shows the properties and distribution of any other overt subject in the language, including nominative Case (Oca 1914).

2.7. Pseudo-relatives

The behavior of *SE*-construction with pseudo-relatives also supports our analysis. As the baseline structure for our argument notice first that pseudo-relatives are not allowed in subject position in Spanish, neither in active (28b) nor in passive (28c) constructions (Aldama 2016: eexx. (58)-(59)):

- (28) a. Los reporteros fotografiaron a Superman que aterrizaba sobre un rascacielos
The journalists took.pictures.of a Superman that landed on a skyscraper
'The journalists took pictures of Superman landing on a skyscraper'
b. ?? Superman que aterriza sobre un rascacielos es una estampa para no perderse
Superman that lands on a skyscraper is a sight to not miss
'Superman landing on a skyscraper is a sight not to miss'
c. ?? Superman que aterrizaba sobre un rascacielos fue fotografiado por la multitud
Superman that was.landing on a skyscraper was photographed by the crowd
'Superman landing on a skyscraper was photographed by the crowd'

⁹ As it is the general case in impersonal *SE* constructions (cf. 2.1).

As Aldama observes, the sharp marginality of the passive construction is directly related to the presence of the pseudo-relative: if it is eliminated the sentence is perfectly acceptable. Moreover, even the minimally differing (29b), where the pseudo-relative is substituted by a non-restrictive relative clause is acceptable:

- (29) a. Superman fue fotografiado por la multitud
 Superman was photographed by the crowd
 b. Superman, que aterrizaba sobre un rascacielos, fue fotografiado por la multitud
 Superman that was.landing on a skyscraper was photographed by the crowd
 'Superman, who was landing on a skyscraper, was photographed by the crowd'

In clear contrast, pseudo-relative phrases can appear with the overt argument of passive *SE* constructions:

- (30) a. Se veían los trenes que llegaban a cocheras
SE saw.pl the trains that arrived to sheds
 'The trains could be seen arriving to sheds'
 b. Se fotografiaron los pájaros que pasaban hacia el norte
SE took.pictures.of.pl the birds that passed.3pl toward the North
 'Pictures of the birds were taken heading towards the North'

The contrast between (28b-c) and (30) indicates that the VP-complement -- *los trenes* in (30)-- is not the subject and that passive *SE* constructions are not passive at all. Contrary to what agreement facts might suggest, the complement of the verb is not in subject, but in object position. Again, this is what we expect if *SE* is the actual subject.

2.8. Summary

The properties discussed through this section support a derivation of impersonal and passive *SE* constructions in which *SE* itself is the “missing” argument and raises to subject position entering into a regular nominative Case relation with T. That fits nicely with most of the characteristic properties discussed in this section: (i) the obligatory presence of an argument; (ii) its control/obviation properties also supporting the presence of a syntactically active argument; (iii) the animacy requirement as naturally derived from *SE*, a pronoun, being in subject position, subject to Montalbetti’s generalization; (iv) the active morphology and syntax of both impersonal and passive constructions, (v) the regular distribution of the pronoun *SE* in terms of Case-requirements, and (vi) the possibility of pseudo-relatives modifying the verbal complement in passive *SE* constructions, showing that it is not the subject of the construction despite the number agreement facts.

The fact that when the right conditions are met (transitive verb with inanimate object), the verbs agrees in number with the object, is the most evident divergence with the general picture we have presented. However, given the lack of number features in *SE*, this fact is still compatible with our proposal if *SE* is treated as a quirky subject. In the next section we deal with the basic morphosyntactic facts of our proposal: the type of features it encodes, how it raises to subject position, etc. We also provide additional evidence that supports our analysis and deal with some potential problems.

3. The role of the defective argument

The idea that *SE* is the missing argument required for *SE* constructions is not a new one (see Cinque 1988, Mendikoetxea 1999, D’Alessandro 2007, and references therein). The proposal that *SE* raises to subject position is not new either (see Oca 1914), but it has been discarded by most authors mainly for two reasons. First, the fact that it is a clitic. In G&B approaches, this essentially means that it cannot raise to subject position (but see Fr. *il* (‘he’)); therefore, *SE* was condemned to attach to a head, (e.g. Cinque 1988). And second, the agreement facts —interpreted as indicating that the object receives nominative— do not conform to the “nominative *SE*” hypothesis straightforwardly.

However, the battery of properties discussed in section 2, including agreement facts, are straightforwardly explained if *SE* is mapped to an θ -position and moved to (Spec, TP), where it

receives nominative case.¹⁰ In addition, G&B theoretical objections to clitic movement are no longer tenable. In this section we develop some ideas concerning the nature of SE and explore some of their consequences. The result will be a structure where SE is a regular nominative pronoun encoding animacy but not person.

3.1. SE as a nominative pronoun

In section 2.4 it was observed that the missing argument is necessarily interpreted as animate. Cinque assumes that it is so because animacy is a “characteristic” of the class of generic, arbitrary NPs (Cinque, 1988: 536); however, as we have shown animacy restriction with SE must be subsumed under Montalbetti’s Generalization (MG). What is interesting about that generalization is that pronouns are not inherently animate; they are so only when they enter into an agreement relation, as the contrast in (18), repeated in (31) shows.

- (31) a. La niña cayó ↔ ella cayó
 The girl fell she fell
 b. La silla cayó ↔ *ella cayó
 The chair fell it_{fem} fell
 c. Salió sin la silla/la niña ↔ salió sin ella
 Get.out.3sS without the chair/the girl ↔ get.out.3sS without it_{fem}/her
 ‘(S)he left without the chair/the child/’ ‘... without the chair/the child/’it/her’

It thus seems reasonable to assume that the locus of MG is agreement. In other words, we propose that the agreement properties of T in Spanish specify not only person and number, but also animacy. The nominative pronominal paradigm is thus morphologically realized according to (32).

(32)	a.	1st	2nd	3rd	animate	unmarked
	b.	yo	tú	él/ella	se	DPs, pro

Note that this is exactly the same paradigm we find for object agreement, where 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person are represented via clitic doubling and DOM, animate arguments via DOM, and inanimate arguments are left unmarked (see Ormazabal & Romero 2013 for a fully fledged proposal concerning Spanish objects).¹¹ Following (32), agreement in Tense specifies the following features: person (and maybe also the features required to distinguish 1/2/3), animacy, specificity/EPP, and number (see Harley & Ritter 2002; D’Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003). Therefore, when T expresses animacy, but not any specific person, it is represented by SE. Note that the subject pronoun SE has no inherently specified person features, hence it is not semantically confined to the third person. As observed by Oca (1914) (see also, for instance, Mendikoetxea 1999; D’Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003), SE may be interpreted as a first person (33a), a second person (33b), an indefinite (33c), or a generic (33d).

- (33) a. ¿se puede? [knocking the door]
 SE can.3s
 ‘May I?’
 b. aquí no se habla [a father looking at his son]
 here no SE speak.3s
 ‘You cannot speak here’
 c. se dijo que no podríamos
 SE said.3s that no might.1p
 ‘It was said that we could not do it’
 d. si se habla alto siempre se molesta a alguien
 if se speak.3s loud always there.is who SE bother.3s

¹⁰ This proposal is also related to impersonal pronouns in other languages, specially, *man* in German or Swedish (Egerland 2003; Malamud 2012; and references therein).

¹¹ Regarding person, see discussion in D’Alessandro (2007). Regarding DOM the issue is far more complex than acknowledged in the text (see Torrego 1998, Leonetti 2008, Rodriguez Mondoñedo 2007, Ormazabal & Romero 2013, and references therein).

‘If someone speaks loud, she always bothers someone’

That SE lacks number agreement features altogether is a common place in the literature. This leaves open the possibility for number features in T to be checked by other arguments, as it is regularly the case in other quirky configurations.

On the other hand, the fact that the complement of the verb agrees in number with the verb does not imply it is the subject; not only for all the reasons provided in section 2, but also because under certain circumstances —again, as in other quirky Case configurations— it fails to trigger agreement. Consider the sentence in (34).

- (34) se les envió (a los enfermos) todas las medicinas que necesitaban
SE 3pD sent.3s (DOM the sick.people) all the medicines that needed.they
Sick people were sent all the medicines they needed

What is interesting about (34) is the fact that Tense does not agree with any of the internal objects, neither with the goal (*sick people*), nor with the theme (*all the medicines*). The verb appears in a default 3rd singular despite the fact that the DO is plural. If the theme were the subject it would obligatorily trigger agreement in (34), as it does in analytic passives (35).

- (35) las medicinas les fueron enviadas (a los enfermos)
the medicines 3pD were sent (DOM the sick.people)
‘Sick people were sent medicines’

Again, this is a strong indication that the issue in passive SE constructions is not about being transitive, not even about the [-DOM] object to require some feature checked, but about T's ability to check its number agreement, left unchecked by its subject SE, with some proximate element, not necessarily the theme (see also sec. 2.5). In (34), the subject position is filled by SE and number agreement is still available. The theme is of the right type to check that agreement, but the goal, being closer to T, blocks that relation. Being a transitive construction, the theme is in its regular position and does not need to agree with T to check its features. Consequently, no agreement is realized, but the sentence is grammatical (see, for instance, D'Alessandro 2003; Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008; and references therein for a similar situation in other quirky subject configurations, and experiencer intervention in Torrego 1996).

In sum, we have proposed that SE is generated in a theta position and moved to (Spec, TP). As a consequence, it behaves as any other overt pronoun and is subject to MG. On the other hand, since it lacks number features, T number may --but does not need to-- be checked by other local arguments, if available, a situation common to other quirky subject configurations.

3.2. Raising to subject

If, as we have argued, SE moves to subject position as any other pronoun, it is expected also to be allowed in raising to subject constructions, moving from an embedded context to the matrix subject. It has been claimed in the literature that this prediction is not borne out (see Sánchez 2002: 45 and references therein). In that respect, it is worth observing that Martins & Nunes (2016) note a dialectal split between Brazilian and European Portuguese with respect to raising, and there are many examples in Spanish accepted as grammatical by Spanish speakers.¹² In sentences from (36) to (39) SE raises, as

¹² Very plausibly, the relative marginality of this construction and what looks more as an idiolectal variation rather than a clear dialectal difference, are connected to the relative marginality of 1st and 2nd person argument raising in the same contexts :

- (i) a. Juan parece haber sufrido mucho
Juan seems.3sg have suffered a lot
'Juan seems to have suffered a lot'
b. (??) (Vosotros) parecéis haber sufrido mucho
You seem.2pl have suffered a lot
'You guys seem to have suffered a lot'
c. (??) (Nosotros) parecemos haber sufrido mucho [cfr. "(nosotros) parecemos tontos"]
We seem.1pl have suffered a lot
'We seem to have suffered a lot'

a regular DP, to matrix subject position. In the b-pairs it is shown that SE comes from the embedded sentence.¹³

- (36) a. se parecía haber perdido los sentidos
SE seemed.3sS have lost the senses
'Senses seemed to have been lost'
- b. *se parecía que (se) había perdido los sentidos
SE seemed.3sS that SE have lost the senses
- (37) a. se parecía haber ganado en altura
SE seemed have gained in altitude
'Altitude seemed to have been gained'
- b. *se parecía que (se) había ganado en altura
SE seemed that SE have been in altitude
- (38) a. Con ello, se parece abogar por dotar a la percepción de una unidad ...
With it, SE seem.3sS advocate for provide to the perception of a unity...
Lit.: 'With that, providing perception with a unity seemed to be advocated for'
[adapted from CORPES, 17/11/2016]
- b. * Se parecía que (se) abogaba por dotar a la percepción de una unidad...
SE seemed.3sS that SE advocate.past for provide to the perception of a unity...
- (39) Las dos adolescentes desencajaban...
The two adolescents un-fitted.3rd.pl.
- a. ... entre la angustia y la impaciencia que se parecía respirar en la casa
among the anguish and the impatience that SE seemed.sing to.breathe in the house
'The two teenagers didn't fit into the anguish and the impatience that one seemed to breathe in that house'
[adapted from CORPES, 17/11/2016]
- b. * ... entre la angustia y la impaciencia que se parecía que (se) respiraba(n)
among the anguish and the impatience that SE seemed.sing that SE breathe.sg/pl
[Arce, Alicia: «En las buenas y en las malas». Núñez, Agustín (coordinador) *Radioteatro*. Asunción: Arandurã, 2008. From CORPES, consulta 17/11/2016]

Moreover, if we consider relative judgments, SE-raising is considerably better than analytical passives, which are absolutely impossible in these contexts (40).

- (40) a. * Los sentidos habían sido parecido(s) perder
The senses had.3pl been seemed(pl) lost
- b. * ... entre la angustia y la impaciencia que eran parecidas respirar
among the anguish and the impatience that was seemed.sing to.breathe.sg/pl

It could be argued that in these contexts SE is not actually moving to subject position, but that it is just clitic-climbing to *parecer* by head to head movement at PF. That seems to be the case of unaccusative SE in examples like (41):

- (41) a. ...pero la opción se parecía haber desvanecido... (El Heraldo de Aragón, 22-7-2010)
... but the option SE seemed.3s have vanished...
'but the option seemed to have vanished'
- b. Justo cuando parecía que todo le iba a ir bien, que se parecía haber liberado

Although we do not have an explanation for the marginality of either (ib-c) or some of the *se*-examples with raising, their parallelism is quite suggestive, given our discussion of the animacy effects in sections 2.4 and 3.1.

¹³ Given that we are aware that this point is a quite controversial one, we have gathered quite a few examples from CORPES and from a Google search, a few of which are reproduced in the text and in this note.

- (i) a. En 1957 se parecía haber pasado a un plano que... (<http://www.abc.com.py/blogs/con-ciencia-en-mente-133/son-peligrosos-los-mensajes-subliminales-primera-parte-2512.html>]; 15-3-2016)
- b. ...cuando se parecía haber llegado a un principio de acuerdo... (<http://www.laopiniondezamora.es/comarcas/2012/10/10/usuarios-26-pueblos-afectados-favor-retrasar-autobus-hora/633024.html>] 15-3-2016)

It is worth observing, however, that our native intuitions coincide with these judgments in general, although there is some uncertainty about number agreement in sentences like (36).

Just when seemed.3s that all to.him was to go well, that SE seemed have liberated
 de su sambenitos psicossomáticos
 from his stigmata psychosomatic
 'Just when everything seemed to go wel for him, that he seemed to have gotten rid of his
 psychosomatic stigmata...' (<http://www.enclavedecine.com/2013/01/midseason-2013-vuelven-californication-y-girls.html> 15-3-2016)

However, data in (41) seems to be restricted to unaccusative *SE* constructions, or constructions where *SE* has an aspectual value, where crucially the clitic does not stand for an argument (see Grant 2013 and references therein). In contrast, clitic climbing is not available for cases of paradigmatic *SE* with argumental import (e.g. reflexives) (42) nor for other argumental clitics (43)-(44).

- (42) a. Parecía haberse visto a sí mismo por primera vez
 seemed.3s have.SE seen DOM himself for first time
 He seemed to have seen himself for the first time
 b. *Se parecía haber visto a uno/sí mismo por primera vez
 SE seemed.3s have seen DOM oneself/himself for first time
- (43) a. Parecía haberlo visto
 seem.3sg have.Cl3msDO seen
 '(S)he seemed to have seen it'
 b. *lo parecía haber visto
 Cl3msDO seem.3sg have seen
- (44) a. Parecía haberle enviado una carta
 seem.3sg have.Cl3msIO sent a letter
 '(S)he seemed to have sent him a letter'
 b. *le parecía haber enviado una carta
 Cl3msIO seem.3sg have sent a letter

This contrast suggests that raising is available for cases in which the clitic has V-functional import, possibly an aspectual one, but it is not available when it represents an argument relation, either as an agreement head or as an argument. In that case, *SE* raises to subject position in (36)-(39) a-pairs. Data on this subsection, although admittedly marginal (see fn. 12, and 13), strongly supports the idea that *SE* is actually a nominative pronoun.

3.3. Secondary predication

An additional argument that supports our analysis is found in secondary predication. Based on the ungrammaticality of examples like (45), the general claim in the literature is that secondary predication on the “implicit” argument is not possible in *SE* constructions (example slightly modified from Saab (2014): ex. (29); also see Pujalte & Saab (2012); although see Mendikoetxea 2008):

- (45) *Ayer se besó a María borracho.
 yesterday SE kissed DOM Mary drunk
 Intended: 'One_i/someone_i kissed Mary drunk_i.'

However, when tense, modal and aspectual considerations are controlled for, secondary predication is rather natural in these constructions (46).

- (46) a. ¡No se besa a María borracho! (Quien lo hace entra en su lista negra)
 not SE kiss.sg A María drunk.masc
 'You cannot kiss Mary drunk! (whoever does it, he will appear in her black list)'
 b. Se puede ir a clase/conducir/besar a María borracho

- SE** may.sg go to class/drive/kiss **A** Mary drunk.masc
 'You may go to class/drive/kiss Mary drunk'
- c. A la política se viene llorado de casa
 To the politics **SE** come.3sg cried from home
 Lit. 'To politics one comes cried from home' [intended: 'In politics, you do not complain when deals do not fit your wishes'; A.Rivera to Rajoy (Spanish president)]
- d. Si se nace pobre, lo más probable es que se muera miserable¹⁴
 If **SE** is.born pour, the most probable is that **SE** die.subj miserable
 'If you are born poor, it is most likely that you will die miserable'

The same conclusion extends to "passive" *SE*. Thus, for instance, no grammaticality contrast arises between (46) and (47) [cfr. Martins & Nunes 2016, sect. 3.1]:

- (47) No se hacen los exámenes borracho
 Not **SE** do.pl. the exams drunk.masc
 'You (gen.) cannot do the exam drunk'

As observed to us by Andrés Saab (p.c.), modality is playing an important role in the grammaticality of these examples in a direction that is not totally clear to us (see Pujalte & Saab 2012 and D'Alessandro 2007 for interesting observations on the different semantic interpretation of *SE* constructions and their syntactic correlations). Without denying the role modal operators and other elements may play in (46)-(47), notice that other examples may also be constructed where no such factor seems to be playing a decisive role:

- (48) a. Allí, todos los años se celebran las fiestas vestidos con trajes típicos
 There, every the years **SE** celebrate.pl the festivities dressed.masc.pl. with vests typical
 'There, they (gen.) celebrate their festivities every year dressed in regional costumes'
- b. En mi tiempo se abordaban concentrado los problemas
 In my time **SE** address.past.plur concentrated.masc.sg. the problems
 'When I was young, you would address problems concentrated'
- c. en esta empresa se trabaja siempre, se trabaja dormido y se trabaja despierto
 in this company **SE** works always, **SE** works asleep and **SE** works awake
 'In this company you always work, you work asleep, and you work awake.'

Moreover, *SE* constructions clearly contrast with analytical passives, where secondary predication on the implicit argument is impossible even when the sentence is tempered or embedded in some modal contexts:

- (49) a. * ¡María no es besada borracho! / ¡No es hecho el examen borracho!
 Maria not is kissed drunk.masc / not is done the exam drunk
- b. * Allí, todos los años las fiestas son celebradas vestidos con trajes típicos
 There, every the years the festivities are celebrated dressed.masc.pl. with vests typical

In this section we have shown that in both impersonal and passive constructions, it is possible to have a secondary predicate on *SE*, showing that the argument is syntactically present.

3.4. Middles

Further evidence for our proposal comes from comparing passive *SE* with middle *SE* constructions. One of the key properties of middle constructions is word order. In contrast to passive *SE* construction, where the preferred word order is *V – Theme*,¹⁵ in middle constructions the theme must precede the verb (Mendikoetxea 1999).

- (50) a. Esta madera se corta fácilmente

¹⁴ Thanks to Silvia Gumiel for this example.

¹⁵ See Raposo & Uriagereka 1996, Martins & Nunes 2016 for arguments showing that object preposing in passive *SE* constructions is not to the subject position but to a left dislocated one.

- This wood SE cut easily
 'This wood cuts easily'
- b. # Se corta esta madera fácilmente
 SE cut this wood easily

Although a full justification is beyond the scope of this paper, the reasons to assume that the clause initial DP occupies the subject position in the middle construction in (50a) are quite compelling.¹⁶ In that case, if we extended our proposal to analyze *SE* in middle constructions as the subject, both *esta madera* and *SE* would be satisfying the same syntactic relation, an unwelcome result. However, there is an important difference between middle and impersonal/passive *SE* constructions that suggests that the clitic has a very different nature in each of them: sharply contrasting with impersonal and passive *SE* constructions, there is no animacy requirement in the case of middle constructions. Mendikoetxea (1999) explicitly observes that middle sentences "describe a state that requires the participation of a cause or an agent [... but passive and impersonal *SE* constructions] describe an action or an activity which requires necessarily and forcefully the intervention of an intentional agent..." (p.1643).

Following our analysis, animacy is a property of agreement, and, in absence of person features, it has to be satisfied by *SE* (see sec. 3.1). Given the lack of animacy effects in middle constructions *SE* cannot be the overt subject pronoun. Our proposal instead is that it should be treated as a voice morpheme. Evidence comes from three different sources. First, although it is not the preferred pattern, in middle constructions animate preverbal DPs may appear without DOM, triggering subject number agreement (examples from M. Zorraquino, apud Sánchez 2002: 66):¹⁷

- (51) a. Los maridos no se encuentran fácilmente
 The husbands no SE found.3p easily
 'Husbands are not found easily'
- b. Las mujeres no se conocen nunca bien
 The women no SE know.3p never well
 'Women are never known well'

Examples in (51) show that the diathesis of the verb is somehow affected in middles (optionally) blocking object Case assignment, as in the case of inchoative constructions. This option is not available for transitive impersonal constructions, suggesting that the middle construction is not active (see sec. 2.5).

A second piece of evidence comes from the fact that in many cases *SE* is not required to form a middle construction. For instance, (50a) is not ungrammatical if *SE* is suppressed (52a). This option is in general available for those verbs that may have a non-agentive external argument.¹⁸

- (52) a. Esta madera corta fácilmente
 'This wood cuts easily'
- b. Los bosques queman fácilmente
 'Forests burn easily'
- c. Los barcos de hierro hunden fácilmente
 'Iron boats sink easily'
- d. El hielo derrite fácilmente
 'Ice melts easily'
- e. las cuerdas de la guitarra tensan fácilmente
 'Guitar strings tauten easily'
- f. estos palos rompen fácilmente

¹⁶ Notice that our concern here is not about the much debated issue of which specific position preverbal subjects occupy in Spanish. Our point is that whatever that position is, it is *SE* in "passive" *SE* constructions, but the argument DP in middle constructions that occupies that position.

¹⁷ Sentences in (51) contrast with those in (i), so called impersonal middle constructions, with the same meaning, but retaining DOM, and lacking number agreement:

(i) a los maridos no se les encuentra fácilmente
 dom the husbands no SE 3pD find.3s easily

(ii) a las mujeres no se las conoce nunca bien
 dom the women no SE 3pO know.3s never well

¹⁸ However, it may also appear with verbs as *vender* 'to sell'.

'These sticks break easily'

Finally, middle voice is morphologically manifested in many languages of the world, including Spanish where there is a specific morpheme to derive middle adjectives (53), suggesting that middle voice is somehow formally encoded in the grammar.

- (53) a. Un terreno anegadizo
'A frequently flooded land'
b. Una persona asustadiza
'An easily frightened person'

Differences between middle sentences, and impersonal/passive constructions indirectly support our analysis. If middles are formed by adding the morpheme *SE* as a pure passivizer (Zubizarreta 1986, Cinque 1988, and subsequent work), the different behavior can be readily explained. The external argument is not projected, therefore no animacy effects are expected, and no Case is assigned to the object. In other words, *SE* does not qualify as a strong pronoun, and, in consequence, it cannot raise to subject position.

3.5. Anaphora binding reanalyzed

It is generally claimed that anaphora binding is impossible in non-paradigmatic *se*-constructions. Consider the following contrast from Pujalte & Saab (2013), Saab (2014):

- (54) a. Aquí uno/la gente puede dejar su saco y marcharse
here one/the people can leave.INF **his/her** coat and leave
'Here one/people may leave their coat and leave'
b. *Aquí **se** puede dejar **su** saco.
here **SE** can leave.INF **his/her** coat
Intended: 'One_i can leave his_i coat here.'

As they observe, possessor clitics may be bound by a generic antecedent, such as *uno* ('one') or *la gente* ('people') in (54a), but *SE* does not count as a possible binder (54b).

However, the ungrammaticality of (54) may involve a feature mismatch between *SU*, a third person pronoun, and *SE*, which, as argued, has no person specification. That conclusion is supported by the fact that when we control for the feature mismatch binding becomes possible. Thus, it has been observed that determiners may act as bound anaphora in Romance: (55a) and (55b) are virtually synonymous sentences (Guéron 1983; 2006; Espinal & Cirino 2017 and references):

- (55) a. Andrés levantó **la** mano en el turno de preguntas
Andrés raised the hand in the turn of questions
'Andrés raised his hand in the question session'
b. Andrés levantó **su** mano en el turno de preguntas
Andrés raised the hand in the turn of questions
'Andrés raised his hand in the question session'

However, unlike the bound pronoun *SU* in (55b), which has person features fully specified, the bound determiner gets its person interpretation from the binder. Compare the uniformity of the determiner in (55a) and (56a) versus the morphological change in person of (55b) with respect to (56b):

- (56) a. Tú levantaste **la** mano en el turno de preguntas
You raised the hand in the turn of questions
'You raised your hand in the question session'
b. Tú levantaste **tu** mano en el turno de preguntas
You raised your hand in the turn of questions
'You raised your hand in the question session'

As expected *SE* does not allow binding of the person pronoun, but it may bind the less specified determiner variable:

- (57) a. Se levantó la mano en el turno de preguntas
SE raised the hand in the turn of questions
'Someone's hand was raised in the question session'
- b. *Se levantó su mano en el turno de preguntas
SE raised his/her hand in the turn of questions
'Someone's hand was raised in the question session'

Unlike *SU*, the anaphoric determiner in the DP is not specified for person features, which makes it possible for *SE* to bind it. Therefore, these examples provide independent evidence for our proposal that *se* is not specified for person (see also sec. 2.4, and Rivero 2002).

3.6. Summary

In this section we have shown that an analysis in which *SE* acts as a regular nominative DP is not only compatible, but, as a matter of fact, fits nicely with data regarding raising to subject or secondary predication. We have also proposed that number agreement in passive *SE* constructions obtains in the same way than in quirky case environments: agreement can be blocked by a dative argument. This fact shows clearly that the internal does not raise to subject position.

4. Conclusion

In this paper we have shown that *SE* is not the by-product or the morphological expression of a certain conspiracy of abstract relations. In the same vein, non paradigmatic *SE* constructions are not the result of a theta grid manipulation or a diathesis change. On the contrary, as the higher argument in the sentence, *SE* is the real trigger of passive and impersonal *SE* constructions simply because of its inability to check all the features in T. This clitic checks a [+animate] agreement relation, what makes its behavior on the one hand similar to that of strong pronouns, and on the other hand similar to DOM. We have also shown that there is evidence that *SE* satisfies the nominative subject relation as any other pronoun does.

The results of this paper, as long as it goes in the right direction, may help to understand the nature of agreement relations, and specially, those of default agreement involved in quirky Case assignment. We let for future works the interactions between the clitic *SE* and object clitics regarding to the use of generalized *leísmo* for masculine animate objects, and to the Person Case Constraint.

Acknowledgements

The two authors, listed in alphabetical order, are equally responsible for the entire content of the paper. We are grateful to Olga Fernández Soriano, Silvia Gumiel, and Andrés Saab for interesting comments and observations. Previous versions of this paper were presented at the *Workshop on Romance SE-SI*, held at the University of Wisconsin at Madison (spring 2016), and *Romania Nova VII*, held in Buenos Aires (November 2016), as well as in the *Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT) 2016-2017 Seminar Sessions*. We are thankful to the participants in these events for lively discussion and suggestions. Very special thanks to Grant Armstrong and Jonathan MacDonald, organizers of the first meeting. This work was made financially possible in part by the Government of Extremadura's grant **GRI5163** (*Grants to Research Groups Program*) to the second author, and by the institutions supporting the research activities of the Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT): the Basque Government grant number **IT769-13** (*Euskal Unibertsitate Sistemako Ikerketa-taldeak*), the Spanish Government's Ministry of Economy and Innovation (MINECO) grant number **VALAL FFI2014-53675-P**, and the University of the Basque Country's (UPV/EHU) **UFI-11/14**.

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