

Deconstructing SE constructions: number agreement and post-syntactic variation *

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*[impersonal se] is a normal transitive structure with no exotic properties,
and we do not have anything interesting to say about it here*

(Raposo & Uriagereka 1996)

Abstract

Most analyses of non-paradigmatic SE in Romance are constructed to derive the distribution of their agreement pattern, which forces them to distinguish passive and impersonal SE-constructions structurally, against all evidence. Instead, we uniformly analyze them as regular active sentences where the subject agreeing with T is *SE* itself, an argumental clitic pronoun lexically specified as human [underspecified person] and lacking number ϕ features altogether. We show that number agreement in *SE*-constructions does not behave as a genuine syntactic agreement relation and cannot be used as reliable evidence to determine the subjecthood of the overt argument, which uniformly shows syntactic properties of direct objects. A new agreement asymmetry is revealed between postverbal and preverbal/null arguments which conceals two different postsyntactic processes with very distinctive properties: morphological *Mutation* of an object clitic into number agreement in a CLLD-like configuration, similar to other crosslinguistically attested agreement displacement processes; and *Number Harmony* of T with a close DP, a phenomenon not ruled by systematic syntactic condition (and most probably processing-based) that we extend to explain similar agreement patterns in other agreement contexts (Icelandic quirky agreement, etc.). Strong evidence for Clitic Mutation comes from Clitic Climbing contexts and from idiomatic expressions containing clitics.

Keywords: non-paradigmatic *se*-constructions, clitic mutation, number harmony, person/number agreement, quirky subjects

1. Introduction

It is a common place in the description of non-paradigmatic *se* in Romance to distinguish two different constructions, traditionally called *passive* (1a) and *impersonal* (1b) *se*

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constructions (P-SEC and I-SEC respectively):⁴

- (1) a. Se censuraron los documentos
SE censored.pl the documents.pl
'The documents were censored'
- b. Se censuró a los oponentes políticos
SE censored.sg DOM the opponents political.pl
'The political opponents were censored'

Following standard characterizations, in P-SECs (1a) the subject obligatorily agrees with the inanimate complement of the verb —*los documentos* ('the documents')—, while no agreement relation holds when the object —*a los oponentes políticos* ('political opponents') in (1b)— shows differential object marking (DOM). The vast majority of the theoretical approaches assume this state of affairs and complete the paradigm in (1) with the minimal pair in (2), generally considered ungrammatical or dialectal in the literature:

- (2) a. * Se censuró los documentos
SE censored.sg the documents.pl
- b. *Se censuraron a los oponentes políticos
SE censored.pl DOM the opponents political.pl

Consequently, they all try to derive this divergence by assuming the existence of two constructions with different structural and case-assignment properties, as the following representative quote illustrates (there are a few exceptions, most explicitly Oca 1914 and Otero 1972, 1973; also see references in footnote 4):

- (3) "If agreement is taken to be a diagnostic for nominative marking (Chomsky 1981, 1995), then [1a] clearly exhibits nominative case. Less clear is the status of [1b]."
[Ordóñez & Treviño 2016 p. 238]

However, even the most cursory inspection of the distribution of these patterns in spoken and written Spanish —as well as in other Romance languages— shows that the paradigm in (1)-(2) is a very conservative simplification of the facts concerning verbal agreement in SECs. As observed by MacKenzie (2013), it constitutes a projection of academicist prescription into grammatical work that happens to fit very conveniently with the theoretical dichotomy illustrated in the previous quotation (3). MacKenzie also claims that the Academy's prescriptive position is of "relatively recent origin", and that counterexamples in popular as well as cult tradition have always been present from the first texts to our days.

⁴ The only analysis we are acquainted of where passive and impersonal *se* are treated truly as the same syntactic construction is the one developed in a series of papers by Pujalte and Saab (especially see Pujalte & Saab 2012, 2014, Saab 2018, Pujalte 2018). There are important empirical and theoretical differences between their analysis and the one we propose here, but we share with them the leading idea of eliminating construction-based stipulative distinctions. See discussion below.

The following example is from a XVI century text in present-day Argentina [Ruy de Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 1594, CDE; from MacKenzie 2013, ex. (9)]:

- (4) y para averiguarlo, se llamaron a los indios
and to find it out, **SE called.pl DOM the indians.pl**

Our first goal in this paper is to present a more detailed and reliable description of the number agreement facts. As we will see in detail in section 2, variation is well documented in all Spanish dialects, although it is not completely directionless. We uncovered a structural distinction that has gone unnoticed in the literature so far:⁵ While the pattern of number agreement with *postverbal* objects exhibits a high degree of variation internal to every dialect, variation with *preverbal* and *null* arguments is systematic and, in part, dialectically determined. It basically splits dialects between those where the object may be doubled by an object clitic (C-varieties), as in (5a), and those where it is cross-referenced by number agreement (A-varieties), as in (5b) (see section 2.2 for details).

- (5) a. [Los documentos] se los censuró
The documents.**pl SE 3O.pl.msc** censored
b. [Los documentos] se censuraron
The documents.**pl SE** censored.**pl**
'The documents were censored'

Our proposal is that both (5a-b) are two instances of the same Clitic Left Dislocation Structure (CLLD) where post-syntactic operations shape the realization of the object clitic as number agreement or as a clitic. As we argue in section 4.2 in detail, our analysis is supported, among other evidence, by the behavior of SECs in Clitic Climbing (ClClimb). In these structures, the embedded clitic may appear attached to the right of the infinitival verb (6a) or 'climb' to the left of the matrix modal verb (6b):

- (6) a. (Ella) intentó censurar**las**
(She) tried.**sg to.censore.Clfem.pl.**
b. (Ella) **las** intentó censurar
(she) **Clfem.pl.** tried.**sg to.censore**
'She tried to censure them(fem)'

In P-SECs, as in regular ClClimb (6a), the clitic appears as an enclitic attached to the infinitive in all dialects (7a). But when it climbs, there is a split: in C-varieties the clitic manifests as such (7b), while in A-varieties it reappears as subject agreement (7c).⁶

⁵ DeMello (1995:71-72) observes this asymmetry with respect to the "educated language".

⁶ MacDonald & Melgares (2018, ex. (19)) present a similar argument to argue that the clitic *le* that appears in non-leísta dialects is a repair strategy to solve a problematic object clitic *lo(s)/la(s)* in SECs (see footnote 14 below):

- (7) a. se intentó censurar**las**
SE tried.sg to. censure.**Clfem.pl.**
- b. se **las** intentó censurar
SEClfem.pl. tried.sg to.censure
- c. se intentaron censurar
SE tried.**pl** to.censure
'Somebody or other tried to censure them'

In other words, when the clitic climbs, it *mutates* into subject agreement in (7c) but remains unchanged as an object clitic in (7b).

We do not intend to present a full dialectological study of these structures in this paper but to argue that, although morphologically marked in the same way, the change of the clitic into number agreement (henceforth *clitic mutation*) and the phenomenon of number agreement with postverbal objects (what we refer to as *number harmony*) are two independent post-syntactic processes, neither of which constitutes a “genuine” subject agreement relation with T in the syntactic component and, consequently, agreement phenomena in SECs cannot motivate a passive-type analysis of SECs.

Our second goal is thus to present a unified analysis of non-paradigmatic SECs as active sentences that do not require any construction-specific constraint to account for Case assignment, argument realization or any other manifested relation, but derive them from the application of fully regular syntactic mechanisms. Specific properties traditionally attributed to these constructions follow from the lexical features of the clitic *se*, an argumental pronoun in subject position that triggers agreement with T, together with the application of post-syntactic processes at the interface levels.

As mentioned, an immediate advantage of our proposal is that it dispenses with passive-like analyses that attribute to these structures emerging properties such as the removal of accusative case required to make the agreement pattern distinctions between +/-DOM objects in Spanish or the agreement/agreementless alternations in transitive impersonal SECs in Italian. In semantic terms there is no property distinguishing the meaning of passive, impersonal or clitic SEC, in spite of the fact that, with varying distribution, the three structures exist in all Spanish dialects. In the syntax side, the evidence presented in section 2 shows that the alleged patterns lack empirical support, depriving passive-based analyses of their *raison d'être*. Consequently, agreement cannot be used in

- (i) a. En Navidad, se suele poder abrazar {**lo/*le**}.
In Christmas, se tends can hug him.ACC/DAT
'In Christmas, one tends to be able to hug him.'
- b. En Navidad, se suele poder {**lo/*le**} abrazar.
- c. En Navidad, se {***lo/le**} suele poder abrazar.

these structures as reliable evidence to uncover underlying syntactic relations. In consequence, it is hard to see how the difference between the two constructions can be formally described. On the other hand, a pure derivational approach explains the complete absence of semantic differences and provides a syntax able to relate accurately to the whole range of PF representations.⁷

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 describes number agreement in SECs and shows that it does not behave as a genuine agreement relation. In section 3 we briefly summarize Ormazabal & Romero's [O&R] (2019a) logic and arguments to analyze SECs as regular active sentences where the logical object of the verb is also its syntactic direct object and the clitic *se* is the nominative pronominal subject. In sections 4-5 we present the details of a derivation that integrates all the syntactic properties discussed in section 3 as well as the agreement facts discussed in section 2. In a nutshell, SECs are regular transitive sentences where *se* merges as the external argument and behaves as a subject pronoun in the syntax, maintaining ϕ -agreement and nominative case checking-relations with T. Structures containing preverbal or null arguments are argued to be cases of CLLD where the DO clitic *lo(s)/la(s)* ('he/she/it/them') mutates into number agreement at PF in some dialects and in specific circumstances. We detail the syntactic derivation and define the domain of application of the clitic mutation rule, supporting the analysis with new evidence related to the clitic cluster paradigm discussed in (6)-(7) and to idioms that contain clitics. As for postverbal complements, we argue that subject agreement is a post-syntactic -- most probably processing-based-- phenomenon not ruled by systematic syntactic conditions. Its distribution is thus not predictable in syntactic terms, although the properties of the syntactic derivation does circumscribe its domain tightly. We close the paper with a general conclusions section.

2. Number agreement in detail

The role of number agreement in *se*-structures has been grossly overestimated, possibly for reasons of normative pressure (MacKenzie 2013). In this section we review all the attested agreement patterns in transitive SE structures and we conclude that number agreement cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish between P-SECs and I-SECs. However, a new asymmetry, formerly unnoticed in the literature, is observed between posverbal objects on

⁷ Similar arguments are presented for Dative constructions in O&R (2013a; b). Specifically, there we argue that the same "construction" can be reached via different syntactic paths which impose different restrictions. That allows us to explain why while doubled datives are non compatible with [+DOM] objects, non-doubled ones are fine in those contexts (also see discussion in section 5.1.3 regarding the relation between clitic mutation and ergative displacement).

the one hand, and preverbal/null ones on the other. This section is organized accordingly: we first analyze the distribution of agreement with postverbal objects (section 2.1), and then with preverbal and null ones (section 2.2). In neither case it is our goal to present a full dialectological analysis, but to describe the agreement properties of SECs, highlighting both their systematic properties and their range of variation. Although we have no doubt that more dialectological and sociolectal studies on the distribution of the facts might reveal interesting properties about the different patterns, from a structural perspective we do not think they would provide any additional information.

For each agreement-type discussed in this section, as well as the ones added in section 5, we have conducted an analysis of the data in the Real Academia Española's *Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI (CORPES)*, and added eventual searches in Google that corroborate our point.⁸ We have also included other sources that we specify in place. Given the characteristics of the database, our main samples are mostly from written sources, which are more prone to be conservative and match the standards imposed by the Academy of the Language. We expect oral speech to depart from the norm to a larger extent, supporting our conclusions further, but the variation observed in the written samples is rich enough for our purposes.

2.1. Dysfunctional agreement with postverbal elements

According to traditional descriptions, the only elements that should trigger number agreement on the verb in SECs are canonical 3rd person objects that are not marked for DOM (1)-(2). However, empirically agreement is very unstable when the object is postverbal. The purpose of this section is to show that number agreement in these contexts behaves unexpectedly from a syntactic point of view by describing the different agreement options we found in these structures in detail.⁹

2.1.1. [-DOM] objects

As far as we know, there are no systematic studies on the range of variation regarding agreement between the verb and [-DOM] objects, but some observations have been made

⁸ Except when indicated, all the examples were retrieved from CORPES between February and July, 2018, and in March 2020. The complete examples and source references are listed in the appendix. Each example there is identified with its corresponding number in the main text. The appendix also contains a short explanation of our data retrieval and analysis of CORPES and Google for each structure. Introductory examples are created to illustrate the basic pattern at each point of the discussion.

⁹ See Pujalte (2018) and Planells (2017) for some observations in the same direction.

now and then pointing out cases where agreement fails (see especially Lemus 2014, Ordoñez & Treviño 2011, 2016, and Pujalte 2018). Our analysis of CORPES suggests that Central American and Northern South-American dialects show a stronger tendency than Southern American and Peninsular Spanish for the verb in SECs to show in a default 3rd person singular form, with no subject agreement whatsoever, as exemplified in (8)-(9).

- (8) a. Se censuró los documentos [cfr. (2a)]
SE V.sg DP.pl
 ‘The documents were censored’
- (9) a. **se recuerda las versiones de Francesco Salviati, del Tintoretto...**
SE remember.3sg the versions.pl of Francesco Salviati, of Tintoretto
 ‘F. Salviati’s, Tintoretto’s... versions are remembered’
- b. ... donde **se establecía las bases del nuevo gobierno** [Venezuela].
 ... where **SE established.sg the basis.pl of the new government**
 ‘... where the foundations of the new government were established.’
- c. **Se señalaba los serios problemas...**
SE pointed.out.sg the serious problems.pl [Cuba]
 ‘The serious problems were signaled...’
- d. [...] que **se haga los procesos correspondientes** [Bolivia]
 that **SE make.sg the processes.pl corresponding.pl**
 ‘...[be the corresponding processes made’

Lemus (2014), from El Salvador, observes that in his own dialect “el problema es que para el salvadoreño promedio ambas construcciones son aceptables y las utilizan indistintamente (v.gr., *Se venden casas* vs. *Se vende casas*).” [the problem is that for the average Salvadoran both constructions are acceptable and are used interchangeably (i.e. *se sell.pl houses.pl* vs. *se sells.sg houses.pl*).].

But the alternation observed by Lemus is much more general. First, it is well known that, independently of the dialect, bare plural objects quite commonly do not trigger agreement (Sánchez 2002 and references). A search on the Internet gives us 843.000 results for the agreeing form, *se venden_{PL} casas* (‘houses are on sale’), compared to 718.000 for the non agreeing one, *se vende_{SG} casas*.¹⁰ In the same direction, now consider the collocation *dar las gracias* ‘to thank’, with a plural object. A search in Google shows that even in written texts the non agreeing version (*se da_{SG} las gracias*) produces more hits (150.000 results) than the prescriptive agreeing one (*se dan_{PL} las gracias*) which only produces 119.000 hits (Google 10/2/2018). Data are even more striking when a dative clitic is inserted between *se* and the verb: 288.000 results do not agree (*se le da_{SG} las gracias*) against 63.500 agreeing results (*se le dan_{PL} las gracias*); hardly an 18% follow the Academie’s rule.

¹⁰ Interestingly, most examples showing agreement in the first page of our Google search are cases dedicated to the discussion of grammatical agreement in SECs, while non-agreeing forms show up in messages oriented to professional house-sellers.

Consider also a more general case such as cooking recipes, where SECs are very common for describing cooking actions. Note that recipes are a clear instance of highly standardized written texts, so we expect them to follow the rule. In spite of this, around a 20% of the examples do not exhibit the expected agreement pattern (Google 28-6-2018):

- (10) a. se fríe las patatas (1.660) - se fríen las patatas (9.820)
potatoes is/are fried
b. se cuece las patatas (2.780) - se cuecen las patatas (11.500)
potatoes is/are boiled
c. se pela las patatas (1.210) - se pelan las patatas (13.600)
potatoes is/are peeled off
d. se corta las patatas (2.890) - se cortan las patatas (24.000)
potatoes is/are cut
- (11) a. se fríe los huevos (3.370) - se fríen los huevos (9.920)
eggs is/are fried
b. se cuece los huevos (3.000) - se cuecen los huevos (11.100)
eggs is/are boiled

Therefore, in addition to the mentioned dialectal trends, there is also a more general sociolinguistic tendency, so that, when the academicist pressure instilled by formal education diminishes, lack of agreement increases.¹¹ Descriptively speaking, we agree with McKenzie (2013) that the weight of agreement has been overestimated to accord to Academic rules.

The reviewers observe that, following analyses for Italian (Cinque 1988; D’Alessandro 2007), these facts may correspond to an alternation between a P-SEC and I-SEC: when the internal argument agrees, there is a P-SEC, when it does not, it is an I-SEC (see Ordoñez & Treviño and references therein). However, this way of rephrasing the distribution is completely inconsistent with the facts in A-varieties. According to standard analyses, in regular I-SECs, accusative case is not suppressed, but assigned to the object, as the presence of object clitics in these constructions clearly indicates:

- (12) a. A tu hermana se **la** vio en malas compañías
DOM your sister SE 3Osgf saw in bad companies
‘Your sister was seen in bad company’
b. Se **nos** obligó a hablar en público
SE 1Opl forced to speak in public
‘We were forced to speak in public’

If non-agreeing forms in (9)-(11) were impersonal forms, I-SECs, we would expect parallel examples with clitics to be also available. In other words, if a speaker allows I-SECs with postverbal objects (without number agreement), the analysis predicts that the accusative

¹¹ A clear indication that agreement in this context is perceived as unclear by many Spanish speakers, is the numerous queries regular people make on this issue to normative linguistic institutions (Real Academia de la Lengua, Instituto Cervantes, FUNDEU, etc.). Otero’s (1972: 238) comment that while “educated people” exclusively use agreement forms, unagreeing forms are common “on the other side of the tracks”, goes in the same direction, although we do not think the sociolectal cut is as radical as he suggests.

clitic would be also readily available in the same contexts. That prediction is not borne out. The availability of the object clitic strategy is precisely what tears apart Spanish dialects between those that essentially resort to agreement, and those that show no preference between agreement and clitic (what we call A and C-varieties respectively; see section 2.2). As a consequence, in many dialects, although lack of agreement as in (13a) is habitual, (13b) is not an acceptable option.

- (13) a. Se recibió tarde las invitaciones
SE received late the invitations
'Invitations were received late'
- b. *se las recibió tarde
SE 3Oplf received.sg late
'They were received late'
- c. Se recibieron tarde
SE received.pl late
'They were received late'

In other words, if I-SECs were freely available in general, there would only be C-varieties, where (13b) and (13c) truly alternate.

In addition, that proposal would only cover one corner of the problem since, as we show next, the rule often fails to apply also on the other side of the equation. We find many cases where impossible syntactic agreement holds between the verb and any noun in the sentence (long distance agreement 2.1.3, complements of prepositions, and even nominal adjuncts 2.1.4).

2.1.2. [+DOM] objects

According to traditional descriptions, [+DOM] objects do not trigger agreement. As in the cases analyzed in the previous subsection, the description does not seem to meet the data in these contexts either, and the sentence rendered as ungrammatical in (2b), repeated here as (14), is much more common than usually assumed (see Planells 2017; Gallego 2019).

- (14) Se censuraron a los oponentes políticos [cfr. (2b)]
SE V.pl DOM DP.pl
'The political opponents were censored'

As a matter of fact, examples in written texts are readily available in every Spanish dialect (15), and much more frequently in oral Spanish.

- (15) a. En 1996 se eligen a las primeras autoridades municipales [Nicaragua]
In 1996 **SE elect.pl DOM** the first authorities.**pl** municipal
- b. ... y se rastreaban a los miembros del Partido [Mexico]

- and **SE** track. **pl** DOM the members. **pl** of the Party
- c. Al iniciarse la menstruación se aislaban a las jóvenes [Spain]
When beginning menstruation **SE** isolated. **pl** DOM the young. women. **pl**

MacKenzie (2013) studies frequencies of sg./pl. in ‘se+verb+a+plural object’ sequences in CREA corpus for *elegir* (‘choose’), *invitar* (‘invite’), *nombrar* (‘name’) and *matar* (‘kill’). Agreement results range from 9.65% with *invitar* to 38.89% with *elegir*. In sum, as we have argued, the distribution of agreement between [+DOM] and [-DOM] objects in written and spoken Spanish hardly reflects anything more than a prescriptive choice. The weaker the influence of the Academy, both geographically and sociolinguistically, the greater the asystematicity of the agreement patterns in SECs. As our examples show, agreement between V and DOM objects permeate Spanish language, and it is only consistently rejected by speakers that show a more conservative, highly prescriptive, linguistic behavior in this regard.

2.1.3. Long-distance agreement

A very common context where this dysfunctional agreement shows up is in long distance agreement relations, where the complement of an infinitival clause agrees with matrix V (Etxepare 2006; Bhatt 2005; Boeckx 2004, among others).

- (16) Se decidieron [censurar los documentos]
SE V. **pl** [Tenseless clause V infinitive DP. **pl**]
‘It was decided to censor the documents’

CORPES yields many such results for all geographical areas (see observations in the appendix), and a Google search for *se requieren hacer* (‘it is required to make’) yields 17.400 hits. Among the examples we observe not only long-distance agreement with [-DOM] objects (17a-b) (Gallego 2019) but, in combination with verbs as *nombrar* (‘to appoint’) also with [+DOM] ones (17c).

- (17) a. En esta profesión **se requieren hacer evaluaciones** [Spain]
In this job **SE** require. **pl** to. make evaluations. **pl**
‘In this job you must conduct evaluations’
- b. Se valoran reducir las superiores a 1300 euros [Spain]
SE evaluate. **pl** to. reduce the superior to 1300 euros
‘Reducing those (pensions) higher than 1300 euros will be considered’
- c. Se requieren nombrar a los responsables [Paraguay]
SE require. **pl** to. appoint **DOM** the leaders
‘I is required to appoint the leaders’

Note that [*requerir*, *valorar* + infinitive] disallow analytic passives (18a), and ClClimb (18b).

- (18) a. *Las evaluaciones fueron requeridas hacer
The evaluations were.pl required to do
b. *las requirió hacer
3OpI required to do
'She required to do it'

Therefore, agreement between the matrix verb and the complement of the embedded infinitive is completely unexpected in this syntactic context as well.

2.1.4. Other dysfunctional agreement patterns: P-Complements and adjuncts

Agreement in SECs become even messier than described so far. The verb actually shows agreement with different postverbal elements that in general syntactic contexts would never trigger agreement. It may agree with complements of lexical prepositions (Gallego 2016; all the examples come from peninsular Sp.).

- (19) Se hablaron [de los documentos]
SE V.pl [PP P DP.pl]
- (20) a. Dijo que se hablaron [PP con las autoridades]
said that SE talked-3.pl with the authorities
'He said that the authorities were talked to'
b. Se llegaron [PP a los 74,3 millones de operaciones]
SE arrived-3.pl to the 74,3 million of operations
'74,3 million of operations were reached'
c. Nunca se pensaron [PP en las condiciones de riesgo]
never SE thought-3.pl in the conditions of risk
'Risk conditions were never considered'
d. [...] donde se llegaron a los 22 bajo cero.
when SE arrive.pl up.to the 22.pl below zero
'Where -22° were reached'

Although marginal compared with some of the phenomena previously presented, it is not an isolated unexpected match: A Google search for "se hablaron de temas" ('talk about issues') produces 6.350 results of plural agreement between the verb *hablar* and P complement *temas* in Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, etc. (21). These figures, in many cases from formal sources, are high enough not to dismiss them.

- (21) [...] aclaró que tampoco "se hablaron de temas de la farándula" [Argentina]
(he) explained that neither SE talk.pl about show business issues.pl

This kind of agreement can even be found in long distance relations: For *se deben recurrir* ('it must be resorted to') Google returns 26.900 hits (22).¹²

¹² Although the sequence "se pueden recurrir a" is ambiguous, and agreement may be regular meaning *appeal*

- (22) Indicó que se deben recurrir a otras figuras [Paraguay]
 He pointed out that **SE must.pl** resort to other criminal definitions.**pl**

Finally, it is very common to find examples where agreement is not even triggered by arguments, but by temporal DP-modifiers.:

- (23) Se bailan los lunes
SE V.pl DP_{Adjunct}.pl

‘People dance on Mondays’

- (24) a. ... donde no se abren los domingos, ...?
 where no **SE open.pl** the sundays.**pl**, ...?
 b. Se trabajan los fines de semana y festivos
SE work.pl the weekends.**pl**, and holidays

In the case of *se abre los domingos* (‘it is opened on sundays’), for instance, in a Google search (2018/06/05) we find 27.400 hits for the irregular agreement pattern *se abren los domingos*, while 27.300 for the expected one, *se abre los domingos*. Although data in this subsection do not fit with standard P-SECs (verbs are not transitive), their morphological behavior mimics it. In the next section we argue that these agreement patterns cannot be understood as subject agreement in any syntactically coherent way.

2.1.5. Number agreement is not subject agreement

If we consider the whole range of data, it is clear that something unexpected is happening from the point of view of subject agreement. As said, figures are big enough not to dismiss them as performance errors. When we turn to true subject agreement, it is much more regular and predictable: neither it appears with unexpected elements nor it suddenly disappears with agreeing ones. Thus, in contrast to (24), temporal nominal adjuncts never ever trigger agreement in other contexts, not even with impersonal verbs:

- (25) llueve/*llueven todas las tardes/ los domingos
 rain.sg/rain.pl every the afternoons/the Sundays
 ‘It rains every afternoon/on Sundays’

And, so-called *attraction errors* aside, true subject agreement is never affected, not even in the most favorable contexts. Thus, for instance, we showed in section 2.1 that bare plurals fail easily to agree in SECs (Mendikoetxea 1999; Sánchez 2002)). In clear contrast, bare plural subjects of unaccusative sentences cannot avoid agreement (26).

(*esas sentencias se pueden recurrir al Supremo*, ‘those sentences may be appealed to the Supreme Court’), the first 50 examples are all instances of irregular agreement with the complement of the preposition and meaning *resort to*.

- (26) *cayó/cayeron almohadillas
 fell.**sg**/fell.**pl** small pillows
 ‘Small pillows fell’

Consider now the causative-inchoative alternation. As in non paradigmatic SECs, in inchoative sentences (i) the verb ends up agreeing with its complement, and (ii) there is a SE intransitivizing the verb (27). In spite of its similarity, agreement failure is unattested.

- (27) se *durmió/durmieron los niños
 SE_{AC} slept.**sg**/slept.**pl** the children
 ‘Children fell asleep’

In section 2.1.4, following Gallego (2016) we have shown that complements of lexical prepositions may induce number agreement. However, in impersonal sentences such as (28) agreement between the verb and the complement of the preposition results in severe ungrammaticality and no result is found in corpora (28b).

- (28) a. Aquí huele a rosas
 Here smells.**sg** to roses.**pl**
 ‘Here it smells like roses’
 b. *Aquí huelen a rosas
 Here smell.**pl** to roses.**pl**
 ‘Here it smells like roses’

Finally, consider analytic passive sentences. In contrast to what we have seen in section 2.1.1 for P-SECs, lack of agreement between the verb and the complement can be regarded as purely accidental (29).¹³

- (29) a. *fue/fueron asesinados muchos opositores al régimen
 was/were killed many opponents to the regime
 ‘Many opponents to the regime were killed’
 b. *fue/fueron rescatados los cuerpos
 was/were recovered the bodies
 ‘The bodies were recovered’

The consequence of these results is clear: agreement facts in non paradigmatic SECs do not work as predicted by theories based on syntactic agreement. In order to explain their agreement patterns, we cannot simply treat them as subjects, because this is not the way subject agreement behaves. As shown in (25) and (28), we cannot resort to a trivial default agreement notion either, because default agreement is systematic, in clear contrast to subject agreement behavior in these constructions (López 2020). Further evidence in the same direction is presented in the next section, where we show that there is a clear asymmetry

13 “fueron rescatados los cuerpos” (7340) vs. “fue rescatados los cuerpos” (1); “fue asesinados los” (7) [the same example is repeated 5 times] vs “fueron asesinados los” (60.200).

regarding agreement between postverbal and preverbal arguments, an asymmetry that, again, is not present in regular subject agreement relations.

2.2. Agreement with preverbal/null arguments

In clear contrast to what we have seen in the previous section, when the internal argument is phonetically null or appears preverbally the situation is radically different. First, [+DOM] arguments, including first and second person ones, exhibit a completely uniform pattern cross-dialectally: they are always doubled by a pronominal clitic and never trigger subject agreement (cfr. (14)).¹⁴

- (30) a. (A las oponentes políticas) se *(las) censuró
DOM DPpl. SE Cl.ac.pl. V.sg
 ‘The political opponents were censored’
- b. * (A las oponentes políticas) se censuraron
DOM DPpl. SE Cl.ac.pl. V.pl
 ‘The political opponents were censored’

Second, descriptively speaking, agreement is restricted to [-DOM] objects (cf. (8)):

- (31) a. Finalmente se *censuró / censuraron [referring to the documents]
 Finally SE **V.sg V.pl**
 ‘Finally, they were censored’
- b. Los documentos se *censuró / censuraron
 DP.pl SE **V.sg V.pl**
 ‘The documents were censored’

No significant exceptions are found in corpora nor in oral elicitations in which any other preverbal element might trigger agreement: neither DOM or first/second person arguments, nor complements of prepositions, adjuncts or long distance objects.¹⁵ In C-varieties, on the other hand, object clitics may double the preverbal/null argument (32); see sec. 5.1.

- (32) a. Los documentos se *(los) censuró
 DP.pl.**pl SE Cl.m.pl V.sg**
 ‘The documents, they were censored’
- b. Se *(los) censuró [referring to the documents]
 SE Cl.m.**pl V.sg**
 ‘They (the documents) were censored’

¹⁴ There is interesting variation regarding which specific clitic appears in the structure and what the extent of DOM argument is in each speaking area, but it seems to be due to dialectal differences on DOM itself (Fernández Lagunilla 1975, Mendikoetxea 1999, 2008, Ordóñez 2018, De Benito 2013, Macdonald & Melgares 2018), rather than different conditions on SECs. The only case that does seem to be sensitive to SEC syntactic environment is the presence of *leísmo* in non-*leísta* dialects (see Mendikoetxea & Battye 1990, Fernández Ordoñez 1999, Rigau & Picallo 1999; Ordoñez & Treviño 2016, MacDonald & Melgares 2018). See footnote 38 in section 5.1.

¹⁵ We will come back to the special case of relative clauses and A'-dependencies in section 5.

Third, as we observe in the examples (31)-(32), either of those two markers is mandatory, so there are no relevant cases of preverbal/null[-DOM] arguments¹⁶ where neither agreement nor object clitic appears. Therefore, variation is systematically established on the agreement/clitic strategy distinction, and it does not affect number: either the verb shows subject number (31), or the preverbal argument is clitic doubled (32).

In many dialects, subject number agreement is the sole or the dominant strategy (31). The alternative clitic structure in (32) has been often reported (Santiago 1975, Sánchez 2002: 42), generally associated to Spanish dialects in the Southern half of South America (*NGLE*, García Negroni 2002), but these studies do not exhaustively describe it and standard theories on SE tend to ignore this phenomenon altogether. Essentially, the clitic strategy coexists with the agreement one in South American Spanish from Argentina to Ecuador. We find both strategies for these areas in the CORPES, and all our (linguist) informants from the Buenos Aires area agree that (i) they are equally available in their dialect, and (ii) there is no semantic difference between minimal pairs with clitic and with agreement (also see appendix):¹⁷

- (33) a. Se las puede sujetar en postes [las orquídeas]
 SE 3Opl.fm can fasten to wooden poles [the orchids]
 b. Se pueden sujetar en postes [las orquídeas]
 SE can.3pl fasten to wooden poles [the orchids]
 ‘The orchids can be fastened to wooden poles’
- (34) a. *estas ponderaciones se las realiza por sectores* [Bolivia]¹⁸
 those considerations.pl.fm SE 3Opl.fm make.sg by sectors

¹⁶ Following a reviewer’s suggestion, we use “null argument” as a term for contexts where the referential DP agreeing with the verb or doubled by the clitic is not overt; no theoretical content should be attributed to it. In fact, we do not think there is a null argument strictly speaking. In section 4 we argue that in both cases, the argumental DP is the clitic itself, whose reference is a definite description previously introduced in the discourse (in the case of null topic contexts) or by the left dislocated DP (when that preverbal topic is present). In section 4 we will accommodate the terminology (null/left dislocated topics) accordingly.

¹⁷ We are very thankful to Carlos Muñoz, Mercedes Pujalte, Andrés Saab and Pablo Zrodjewski for patient discussion and important clarifications.

¹⁸ In the case of null arguments (34), most of our informants observe a slight preference for (34b), also noting some tendency to use the clitic strategy in colloquial contexts and the agreement one in written or formal ones. With preverbal objects, the situation is reversed and our informants (from Argentina) agree that they highly prefer the agreement pattern over the clitic one. In fact, they find sentences like (ia), not ungrammatical but “strange” or even “somehow degraded”, in contrast to (ib), which they consider completely natural:

- (i) a. *?Las orquídeas se las puede sujetar en postes de madera
 The orchids **SE 3Opl.fm** can fasten to wooden poles
 b. Las orquídeas se pueden sujetar en postes de madera
 The orchids **SE can.3pl** fasten to wooden poles

However, it may be a particularity of the Rioplatense dialect. This is confirmed by our results in CORPES, where we find almost no clitic example with preposed objects in Argentina and Uruguay, but numbers increase as we go North, and examples are extremely common in Ecuador. Our Argentinian informants tend to “save” these examples marking the preverbal object with DOM, which suggests that in Rioplatense speakers are shifting from clitic left dislocation to some generalized DOM strategy that we do not fully understand.

- b. *estas ponderaciones se realizan* por sectores
 those considerations.**pl.fm SE make.pl** by sectors
 ‘Those considerations are made by sectors’

In clear contrast, the clitic strategy is impossible with [-DOM] postverbal objects:

- (35) **se las puede sujetar las orquídeas en postes de madera*
SE 3Opl.fm can fasten **the orchids** to wooden poles
 ‘The orchids can be fastened to wooden poles’

In other words, what we see in C-varieties is that the same syntactic relation, object, may be alternatively represented as subject agreement or as an object clitic, and speakers treat them alike in semantic terms. The clitic strategy, however, is not a fully dialectally determined phenomenon. In the rest of the dialects it is possible, although uncommon, to find object clitics in SECs (36).¹⁹

- (36) a. Cuando **se la** desencaja, *la luz de la lámpara* ilumina... [Mexico]
 When **SE 3Osg.fm** disarrange.**sg**, the light of the lamp illuminates
 b. En cuanto a *las incorpóreas*, no **se las** veía como cosas
 With respect to the incorporeal, do not **SE 3Opl.fm** saw.**sg** as things
 c. ... *las palabras del bautizo*, **se las** degrada. [Dominican Rep.]
 ... baptism words, **SE 3Oplfm** degrade.**sg**
 d. Por el contrario, si **se los** considera variables, [C. Rica]
 On the contrary, if **SE 3Oplms** consider.**sg** variable

This clitic/agreement alternation sounds quite natural even for people that supposedly do not use it. Although clitics are not even considered an option in Peninsular Sp., these sentences do not strike as ungrammatical. They do not induce interpretive issues either, and, as said, they are even occasionally elicited (see appendix). Arguably, this can be related to the fact that in *every* dialect object clitics are obligatory in downstairs position in ClClimb (7), repeated as (37), and it is an acceptable option in unaccusative infinitives under perceptual verbs (38)²⁰.

19 Ordoñez & Treviño (2016) and MacDonald & Melgares (2018) report that in Mexico and Honduras respectively the clitic strategy is impossible with [-DOM] objects. Although not very frequent, our CORPES data include some cases from both areas:

- (i) a. [... las estrellas fugaces], **se las puede ver** con mayor facilidad.
 the shooting stars SE cl.fpl may.sg see with beager easiness
 ‘[... the shooting stars], you may see them more easily’
 b. [Sus funciones...] cuando se las quiere simular por esquemas clásicos
 Their functions when SE cl.fpl want simulate by schemes classics
 ‘[...] when you want to simulate them by classical schemes’

20 Note that in certain dialects (e.g. Basque Sp.), examples in (38) may be construed as agreement (*a los trenes se les verá pasar*), and not merely as clitic doubling (see section 2.3). That suggests that there is more structure involved, as in certain secondary predicate and raising-to-object constructions (see Laca 1995, O&R 2013a; b). Furthermore, with transitive verbs, in the regular active sentences speakers show some hesitation between dative and accusative marking of embedded subject (Rigau & Picallo 1999).

- (37) a. se intentó censurar **las**
SE tried.sg to.censor **Clfem.pl.**
- b. se **las** intentó censurar
SE **Clfem.pl.** tried.sg to.censor
- c. se intentaron censurar
SE tried.**pl** to.censore
'Somebody or other tried to censor them'
- (38) a. se verán pasar los trenes
SE will.see.**pl** pass.by the trains
- b. [los trenes] se los verá pasar
[the trains] **SE 3Opl.msc** will.see.sg passing.by
- c. [los trenes] se verán pasar
[the trains] **SE** will.see.**pl** passing.by
'Trains will be seen passing by'

Examples in (37) illustrate the clitic/subject number agreement alternation in ClClimb. As in the case of South American Sp. (32), but now holding for A-varieties as well, the same syntactic relation is encoded both by subject number agreement and by an object clitic.

In sum, although the clitic strategy is much more general in some dialects, it is used up to some extent in every dialect. Standard descriptions fall short regarding the importance of this structure. Note that, inasmuch as our description is right, theoretical approaches based on constructions are forced to postulate three different syntactic constructions -- passive, impersonal and clitic SECs-- that show no meaning or use differences and, quite tellingly, extend to all dialects.

2.3. *First and second person objects*

To complete the picture, first and second person objects show no dialectal or idiolectal variation whatsoever: they never ever allow number or person agreement, and always manifest themselves through an obligatory object clitic, as in any transitive clause. Compare (31)-(32), summarized in (39), with (40):

- (39) a. (Los documentos) se censuraron
The documents SE censored.**pl**
'The documents were censored'
- b. % (Los documentos) se los censuró
The documents.**pl** SE Cl.m.**pl** censored.**sg**
'(The documents), they were censored'
- (40) a. * (nosotros/) se censuramos /censuraron (nosotros/)
us SE censored.1pl/censored.pl us
- b. (A nosotros) se nos censuró
'(Us), we were censored'

Examples like (40a) are completely unconceivable for any speaker of Spanish: there is no exception reported in the literature, no [*se* + Verb(2nd pers. pl.)] result in CORPES and the few [*se* + Verb(1st pers. pl.)] combinations are non-corrected typos or anacoluthons (e.g. *si lo que se pretendemos es...* ‘if what SE/we pretend is...’), where the first person plural clearly cannot be the internal argument of the verb.²¹

Once again, this sharply contrasts with analytical passives, where first and second person objects are legitimate candidates for passivization and, obviously, cannot surface as object clitics:

- (41) a. Nosotros fuimos censurados
 we were censored
 b. * A nosotros nos fue censurados
 DOM us us was censored
 ‘We were censored’

Given the availability of first and second person subjects in other constructions across the board and, especially, analytical passive (41a), its failure in structures like (40) comes as a surprise in the P-SEC/I-SEC analysis.

2.4. Summary

The behavior of number agreement in *SECs* is completely exceptional among Spanish subject agreement relations in different respects:

- (i) With preverbal/null arguments, subject agreement alternates with object clitics, systematically occurs with [-DOM] objects only, and never fails.
- (ii) With first and second person objects no agreement is possible; they are uniformly represented as object clitics.
- (iii) With postverbal elements agreement is often erratic; it frequently fails with [-DOM] objects and unexpectedly occurs with other DPs : [+DOM] DOs, long distance items or complements of Ps and adjuncts.

This distribution sharply contrasts with analytical passives, where subject agreement is robust and systematic.

In the remaining of this paper we present an integral analysis of non-paradigmatic *SECs* that derives the distribution in (i)-(ii); we also argue that although (iii) should be analyzed by extra-grammatical mechanisms yet to be determined —thus, its distribution is not predictable in syntactic terms— the properties of the syntactic derivation do constraint their domain of application. With that goal in mind, we first summarize the gist of the

²¹ First and second person objects have been analyzed as object agreement markers shaped like clitic doubling, as opposed to third person clitics *lo(s)/la(s)*. See especially O&R 2013, Odria 2017, Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2016 and references; also see Baker & Kramer 2018, Alcaraz 2018 and references for a different view on clitic doubling. We briefly come back to these cases in section 4.2.

unified analysis in O&R (2019a) and the main arguments that support it. In sections 4 and 5 we present the details of the derivation and discuss the post-syntactic operations responsible for “subject” number agreement with the object and, more specifically, the distribution of facts presented in this section.

3. The properties of *SE* constructions in a nutshell

Number agreement between the logical object *los documentos* (‘the documents’) and the verb in (1a) is generally used as an indication that the former is the nominative subject of the sentence. That requires as a pre-condition the existence of two different constructions, passive and impersonal. In fact, the primary focus of most analyses on *SECs* has been to justify (1a) as some kind of “selective passive” where accusative case is removed only for [-DOM] complements, so that subject agreement may target them.²² The expected Case-suppression not only requires *ad hoc* mechanisms specific for these constructions but, in fact, it shows no sign of being empirically right. Quite to the contrary, the only potential argument to maintain P-SEC as a separate construction is based on two empirical claims that have been rejected in section 2. First, as observed, under the right structural conditions the object may realize as an object clitic, which dismantles the idea that this object may not show up marked with accusative case.²³ Second, preverbal and postverbal arguments -- allegedly, all genuine subjects-- present a radically different behavior, which questions their subjecthood. Third, number agreement in *SECs* does not behave as we would expect if it was genuine syntactic agreement and, contrary to expectations, the system does not divide those that agree from those that do not in a black-and-white way, which invalidates number agreement as evidence for nominative Case or subjecthood. This alone already indicates that the passive approach is not on the right track but, in addition, there are independent positive arguments that confirm the same conclusion.

22 Specific proposals can be broadly divided between those which argue for two different *se* tokens, and those which argue that *se* is inserted in different designated positions. For a good state-of-the art on non-paradigmatic *se* and throughout discussion of the issues involved see, especially, Mendikoetxea (1999) for Spanish, D’Alessandro (2007) for Italian and Sánchez (2002) for Romance in general with special attention to Spanish. We set aside the case of Romanian, which may require an independent analysis (Dobrovie-Sorin 1998).

23 Mendikoetxea (1992), Ordoñez (2004) and Torrego (2008) argue that Italian and Spanish differ in that the former allows the clitic strategy but Spanish does not. As the discussion in the previous section shows, that is not the right generalization. See also the previous footnote.

3.1. *A regular active sentence with se as the subject*

Our proposal (O&R 2019a)²⁴, developing a suggestion by Oca (1914),²⁵ is that P-SECs are just active transitive sentences, where the internal argument of V is a regular direct object and the subject is *se*. The peculiarities of these constructions --especially those regarding agreement-- are due to the lexical properties of *se* as the subject agreeing with T, with no difference between passive and impersonal SECs:

A) P-SECs are active sentences in all morphological or syntactic senses: far from having different voice, impersonal and passive *se* have the same active morphology (Raposo & Uriagereka 1996; Rivero 2001; O&R 2019a) and their syntax is that of an active sentence. Furthermore, P-SECs differ from analytical passives in all conceivable respects, and there is no single syntactic property that teases them apart as a class. First, P-SECs may be formed with all transitive predicates that allow a [-DOM] complement, (with the only restrictions imposed in C below). That includes, crucially, predicates completely reluctant to analytic passivization, where it is not even clear that the alleged accusative case to be erased existed in the first place (e.g. measure complements; Mendikoetxea 1999). Second, they do not accept *by*-phrases (Pujalte 2013, Saab 2014, *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española* [NGLE] 41.6.1, and references). Finally, they do not “passivize” either 1st/2nd person objects nor animate ones (see sec. 4).

B) Consequently, the overt argument (the internal argument of the verb) is the syntactic object of the sentence, not its subject, contrary to what the agreement rule might suggest. That is shown, among other things, by the fact that it can be modified by pseudorelatives (Aldama 2016, O&R 2019a), and that, unlike the real subject of analytical passives, it may not be controlled from outside (MacKenzie 2013). Furthermore, idiomatic lectures of fixed object idioms are not lost in P-SECs, showing that the grammatical relations are not altered (O&R 2019a; see also sec. 5.1).

C) The subject of the sentence is the clitic *se*, as proposed by Oca (1914). As such, it shows properties typical of overt pronominal nominative subjects in the language, including its animacy interpretation: the structure is only possible when the subject is argumental, and it is disallowed by verbs that do not select animate subjects (Mendikoetxea 1999). *Se* must appear in a Case-position, and thus, is incompatible with infinitives that do not license

24 In many respects, the present paper and O&R 2019 complement each other and may be seen as two sides of the same proposal. Space limitations and the very dynamic of the paper advise against extending section 3 further by repeating the arguments there. The reader is encouraged to go to the original paper, to Mendikoetxea (1999), and references there for extensive discussion on the properties listed in this section as well as for some additional ones.

25 Otero (1972, 1973) makes a similar proposal; also see Raposo & Uriagereka 1996 for some suggestions in the same direction, although they end up proposing a mechanism of accusative-absorption in the direction of standard passive-like analyses.

nominative subjects, but allowed in tensed clauses in general and also in infinitival constructions where overt pronominal subjects are licensed (Cinque 1988; Mendikoetxea 1999; also see O&R 2019a, sections 2.4 and 3.1 for a possible way to derive the animacy effects within a general theory of agreement). It also raises in raising-to-subject contexts, as required by case considerations (Mendikoetxea 1999, Martins & Nunes 2016 and O&R 2019a, sect. 3.2 for extensive discussion).

D) *Se* is syntactically active: it may host secondary predication both in impersonal and in passive SECs (Demonte 1986; Rivero 2001; Martins & Nunes 2016; O&R 2013b and references there; but see Pujalte & Saab 2012 for different judgments; also see arguments in Collins 2017 for a related discussion with respect to short passives in English). In addition, it shows the same obligatory control/disjoint reference distribution in infinitive/subjunctive alternations as any other active sentence, no matter whether it is interpreted as a generic or an indefinite, and may be the antecedent of anaphoric elements vague enough not to conflict in features with it, as we argue next.

It has to be underlined that the idea that *se* is the missing argument required in SECs has already been proposed for I-SECs (Cinque 1988, Mendikoetxea 1999, D'Alessandro 2007, and references therein). Moreover, the reasons adduced in the literature to discard Oca's idea that *se* behaves like a clitic subject are pre-minimalist theory-internal arguments that do not hold anymore (see O&R 2019, section 3 for discussion). In sum, a derivation of I-SECs and P-SECs where *se* itself is the sentential subject and participates in a regular nominative case relation with T straightforwardly derives all the structural properties of non-paradigmatic SECs listed above in a natural and unified way.

3.2. Agreement features in *se*

There is a property of SECs, observed by MacDonald (2017), that is particularly indicative of their syntactic status, because not only it shows that there must be a sentential subject (MacDonald's conclusion), but also supports our claim that that subject must be *se* itself. At the same time, this argument gives us a clear indication of *se*'s formal feature specifications. Consider first the pair in (42) [from Saab 2014, ex. (29)]:

- (42) 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/her_i coat here.'

As Saab notes, the contrast in (42) shows that, unlike other impersonal elements such as *uno* ‘one’ or *la gente* ‘people’, *se* does not allow binding of the 3rd person pronoun *su*. However, the ungrammaticality of (42b) follows if the relation involves a feature mismatch between *su* (‘his/her’), a third person pronoun, and its antecedent *se*, underspecified for person.²⁶ That conclusion is supported by the fact that when we control for the feature mismatch binding becomes possible.²⁷ Thus, it has been observed that determiners may act as bound variables in Romance, but unlike the bound pronoun *su*, which has person features fully specified, this bound determiner gets its person interpretation from the binder. As we might expect, in contrast to the impossibility of (42b), *se* may bind the less specified determiner variable, as observed by MacDonald (2017):

- (43) Aquí **se** puede dejar **el** saco.
 here **SE** can leave.INF **the** coat
 ‘One_i can leave his/her_i coat here.’

Two conclusions may be driven from this discussion. First, *se* is a syntactically active subject and, as such, has the ability to bind a c-commanded anaphoric element. Second, given the contrast between minimally specified determiners and fully specified pronouns, we must conclude that *se* is underspecified for person.

The same conclusion is supported by the fact, largely discussed in the literature, that the interpretation of *SECs* is not confined to third person, but may also be interpreted as a first person (44a), a second person (44b), an indefinite (44c), or a generic one (44d) (Oca 1914; also see Cinque 1988, Menuzzi 1999, Mendikoetxea 1999; D’Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003, among others).

- (44) a. ¿se puede? [knocking on 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’

²⁶ Eric Reuland (p.c.) observes to us that in general, underspecification does not create an offending feature mismatch, and he mentions two such cases: *zich*, underspecified for number and gender, is generally bound by a full DP; similarly, in Russian a full DP may bind underspecified for person, gender and number *sebjá*, etc. In fact, that is a very general pattern with anaphors and bound pronouns. However, observe that in all those cases, the most specified object is the binder (*Jan*, *Ivan*) and the least specified one is the bindee. In contrast, the binding problems with *SECs* arise in the reverse situation, where the binder *se* (underspecified for person features and lacking number) fails to bind *su*, which is specified for person and number. In that respect, the contrast with *uno* as a binder, mentioned by Saab, and the possibility of weak determiners in the bindee position are quite revealing.

²⁷ We frame the discussion in a weak definite approach (e.g. Guéron 1983, 2006 and much work thereafter; also see Espinal & Cyrino 2017 for recent extensions) because it is based on the morphological features of the determiner and maps most directly to the observation that determiners and possessive pronouns behave differently with respect to binding by *se*. However, in virtually all approaches (e.g. Vergnaud & Zubizarreta’s 1992) the non-denoting determiner and, importantly, its difference with possessive pronouns plays a role and our point may be equally raised.

- 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 se bother.3s DOM someone
'If someone speaks loud, she always bothers someone'

A quick revision of the contexts in (44) shows that the specific interpretation *se* adopts is determined on pragmatic factors, which also supports our claim that it is underspecified for person in the computational component.

In sum, we thus conclude that *se* is a fully syntactic pronominal subject with nominative Case, always animate and minimally specified for the person features and no number ϕ features (O&R 2019a). With these ingredients, we present a formal analysis of *SECs* as regular sentences that derives all the properties discussed through the paper. That includes the agreement distribution in section 2 and the structural properties summarized in this section and developed in detail in O&R (2019a).

4. The derivation

4.1. The syntax of *se*-constructions

From the point of view of the syntactic derivation, the initial quote heading this article, from Raposo & Uriagereka, may be extended to all non-paradigmatic *SECs*:

(45) P-*SECs* and I-*SECs* are normal transitive structures with no exotic properties.

Derivationally speaking this is the null hypothesis. First, *se* is introduced by external merge in the argument position determined by the predicate, the external argument position for transitive active sentences (46) and unergatives, and the internal argument position for unaccusatives and passive sentences. We illustrate with the derivation of transitive structures because they cover all the relevant structural properties under discussion.

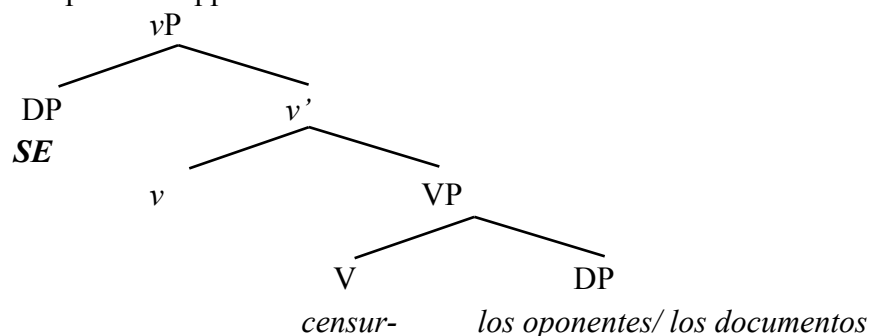
(46) a. Se censuraron los documentos [=1a]

SE censored.**pl** the documents.**pl**
'The documents were censored'

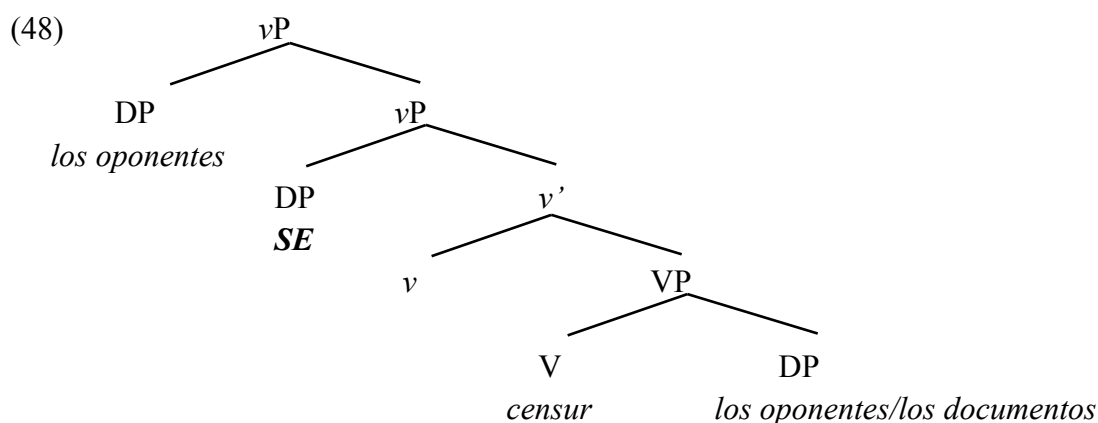
b. Se censuró a los oponentes políticos [=1b]

SE censored.**sg** **DOM** the opponent political.**pl**
'The political opponents were censored'

(47)



The difference in the derivation between [+DOM] and [-DOM] complements is the same difference observed in other transitive constructions, and it is therefore independent of the properties of *se*. We follow previous work in the literature arguing that there is a structural difference between DOM and non-DOM objects in Spanish (Torrego 1998, López 2012, O&R 2007, 2013a,b, 2016, 2019b and references there): object agreement is triggered only in the presence of a rich feature structure; more specifically, when the geometry encodes person in the sense of Richards (2014). Therefore, [-DOM] direct object DPs like *los documentos* ('the documents') in (46a) do not maintain any person ϕ feature checking relation with *v*. The *a* in [+DOM] DPs (46b), on the other hand, is a morphological reflex of a syntactic agreement/Case-checking relation in the *v*-domain. Simplifying things a bit, let us assume that that relation is realized in (Spec, *v*P).²⁸



The analysis extends to first and second person objects, for which we have argued that clitics are actually agreement markers and have person and number ϕ features.²⁹

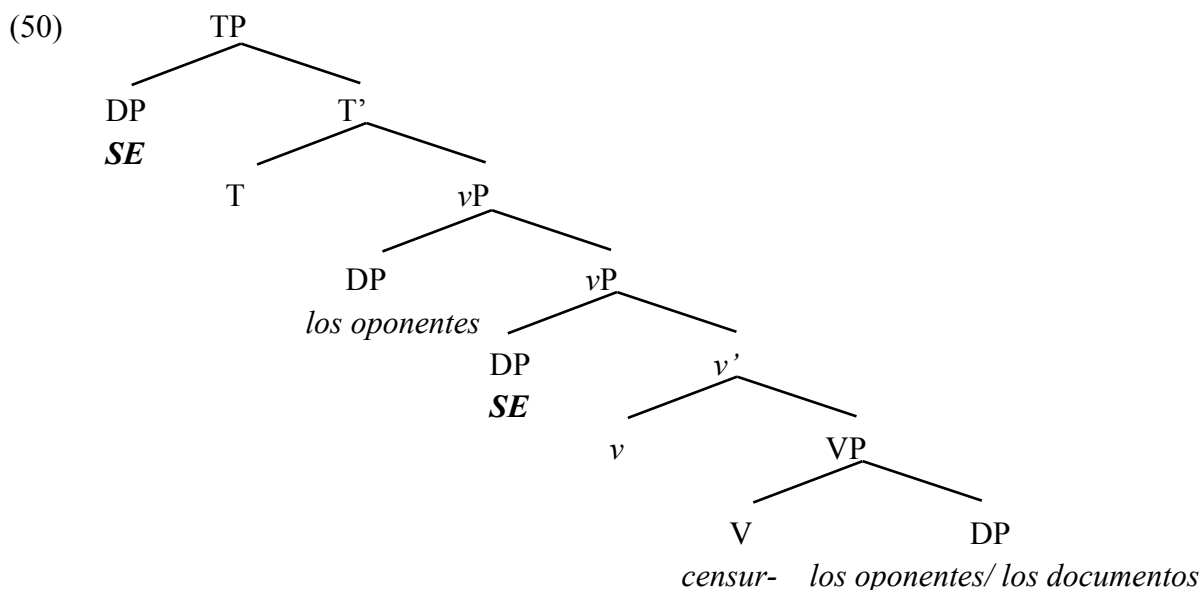
- (49) Se os/nos castiga (a los mismos de siempre) sin razón
 se 2Opl/1Opl punish.sg (DOM the same of always) without reason
 ‘You/We, the usual suspects, are punished without a reason’

At this point of the derivation, accusative Case has been assigned to the object, both in P-SECs and in I-SECs. From that point on, the derivation is the same for all contexts: T is merged and triggers an agreement relation with *se*, following the same driving force and the same process as any other regular subject does. In (46b), given standard assumptions, *se*

28 See O&R (2013a; b) for extensive discussion, including dialectal variation, and for some differences between Case and agreement relations; also see next footnote. The “inert nature” from the point of view of agreement of inanimate objects explains, for instance, why these elements incorporate in polysynthetic languages, why they do not trigger PCC effects or why in Spanish 3rd person inanimate object clitics behave as determiners, and not like agreement markers (Roca 1996; O&R 2013a).

29 See O&R (2013) and references. Our general analysis of SECs works equally well if 1st and 2nd person clitics are not agreement markers but pronominal clitics (e.g. Baker & Kramer 2018 and references). It does not depend on our specific analysis of DOM and dative doubling, and alternative analyses are compatible with it. The crucial factor that will make the difference in our derivation in section 5 is the fact that 1st and 2nd clitics, and also animate arguments, are specified for person while inanimate *lo(s)/la(s)* are not.

enters into an agreement relation with T, moves to (Spec, TP) where it checks the EPP feature in T, and receives nominative Case.



A reviewer raises the question of why SECs cannot be passivized if they are active (51):

- (51) a. Se enviaron las libretas
SE sent.pl the notebooks
'Notebooks were sent'.
- b. *Se fueron enviadas las libretas
SE were sent the notebooks
'(Intended meaning) Notebooks were sent'.

However, if the derivation in (50) is on the right track, the ungrammaticality of (51b) follows naturally. Once we abstract from the agreement facts under dispute, (51b) is equivalent to (52b), where the passive construction is "feinted" in the verbal morphology, but the required external argument demotion is not made effective. The only difference is that instead of *ella*, in (51) *se* is the subject.

- (52) a. Ella envió las libretas a la policía
'She sent the notebooks to the police'.
- b. *Ella fueron enviadas las libretas a la policía
'(Lit.) She was sent the notebooks to the police'.

The passive sentence truly corresponding to (51a) is not (51b), but (53b); in the same way that the passive version of (52a) is not (52b), but (53a). As a matter of fact, (53b) is grammatical and maintains the generic and indefinite readings typical of SECs³⁰.

³⁰ We are not aware of any study about the interpretation of null agents in passive sentences, but it seems to be restricted to animate referents, as in the case of SEC (see *NGLE*:41.3). Thus, although in (i) the verb typically takes inanimate agents to express the way something is burnt (ia), it is hard to understand a non-human agent in the passive version if it is not overtly expressed.

- (i) a. El ácido/ el sol/ la llama abrasó su piel
'The acid/ the sun/ the flame burnt his skin'.
- b. Su piel fue abrasada
'His skin was burnt'.

- (53) a. Las libretas fueron enviadas por ella
 ‘The notebooks were sent by her’.
 b. Las libretas fueron enviadas (*por se)
 ‘The notebooks were sent (by SE)’.

The difference between (53a) and (53b) is that, unlike *ella* (‘she’/‘her’), *se* is a nominative pronoun, and, in consequence it cannot appear in oblique contexts, such as *by* phrases. As we expect, *se* may appear in well-formed passivized sentences where it is interpreted as the V complement raised to subject position (O&R 2019a, ex. (26)):

- (54) En este 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’

In sum, no *ad hoc* mechanism is postulated, and consequently, the syntactic distribution of SECs is correctly predicted to be the same as that of active sentences. The derivation is restricted exactly by those general conditions constraining any other syntactic derivation and by nothing else, and their characteristic features are only determined by the specific properties of the lexical elements involved, as in any other case. The only remaining issue is the agreement pattern, to which we will return in section 5.

4.2. Clitic Left Dislocation and dialectal variation

Consider now the derivation of sentences containing a preverbal/null argument. Remember that, as discussed in section 2.2, this structure is subject to the dialectal variation illustrated in (55a-b).

- (55) a. (Los libro-s) se vendieron
 (The books.pl) SE sold.pl.
 The books, they were sold’
 b. (Los libros) se **los** vendió
 (The books.pl) SE Cl.masc.pl. sold.sg.
 The books, they were sold’

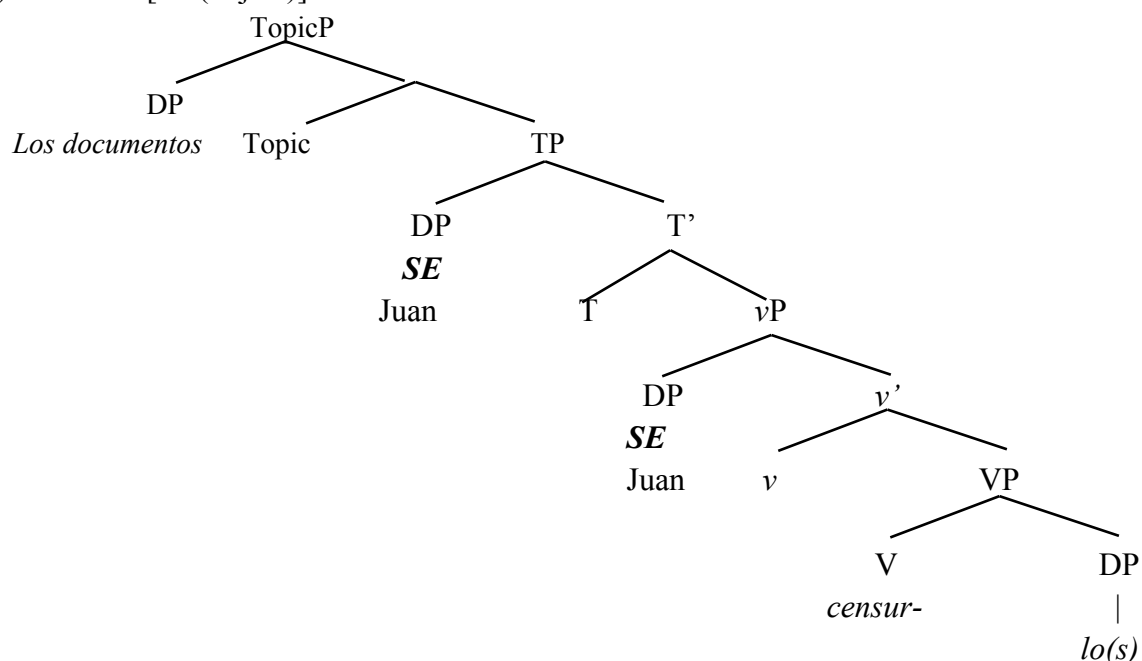
(55b) corresponds broadly to Sp. dialects of South America from Argentina to Ecuador, while (55a) is the only form prescribed by the Spanish Academy and is used in other dialects of Spanish with the qualifications discussed in section 2.2. Raposo & Uriagereka (1996) and Martins & Nunes (2016) argue that the preverbal argument in sentences like (55a) is not in subject position neither associated to it, but left dislocated.³¹ Considered from our ‘active’ approach to P-SECs, the structure of (56b) is exactly the same we find in CLLD in Spanish and other Romance languages (56a). We assume that the object DP is base-generated in a

31 They present a battery of arguments concerning Galaic-Portuguese, but many of their arguments extend to Spanish and Romance in general.

non-argumental position (van Riemsdijk 1997 and references therein),³² and that D-clitics *lo(s)/la(s)* are merged in the internal argument position from where they cliticize to the verb (Uriagereka 1997, Roca 1996, O&R 2013a, a.o.). The derivation is represented in (57):

- (56) a. Los documentos (Juan) los censuró ____
 The documents Juan Cl.masc.pl censored.sg
 ‘The documents, John censored them’
- b. Los documentos se los censuró ____
 The documents SE Cl.masc.pl censored.sg
 ‘The documents somebody censored them’

(57) [DP(object)]₁ SUBJECT Clitic₁ + V + T DP₁



There are strong reasons to assume that (57) is the structural description for both (55b), with an overt clitic, and (55a), where the DP-clitic has mutated into number agreement post-syntactically (see sect. 5.1). Except for the presence of the dislocated element, the derivation extends to cases where the argument is not overt: in our terms, these are null topic contexts where, as in (57), the DP *los* (‘them’) merges in the argumental position.

The same analysis automatically extends to 1st and 2nd person objects, and to animate ones. In this case, however, there is no variation: all dialects and speakers follow the object clitic strategy:

- (58) a. A vosotros (Juan) os censuró
DOM you (Juan) Cl.2.pl. censored.sg
 ‘As for you, John censored you’
- b. A vosotros se os censuró
DOM you SE Cl.2.pl. censored.sg
 ‘As for you, you were censored’

32 We represent the dislocated element in the specifier of TopicP, but nothing hinges on this decision as long as the pronoun cliticizes from the argumental position.

- c. *A vosotros se censurasteis
DOM you SE censored.2pl

We will come back to the ungrammaticality of (58c) and related issues in section 5.1, but at this point it is important to stress that the main difference between (55) and (58) is that 1st/2nd person pronouns are fully specified for person and number, while the clitic *lo(s)* has no person features.

At this point, subject-T agreement takes place and the derivation is finished. The specific properties of the agreement relation between *se* and T will determine the range of possibilities as well as the differences between object D-clitics in (55) on the one hand and first/second (58) and animate person object clitics on the other, but these effects do not occur in syntax, but at PF.

4.3. Formal feature agreement between se and T: on the \varnothing defective nature of se

Summarizing our results on the properties of *se* so far, we have shown that *se* has the following properties: it is a nominative pronoun (section 3.1) underspecified for person (section 3.2). Furthermore, there is independent evidence and general consensus that *se* lacks number feature specifications (Mendikoetxea 2012 and references).³³ Being a nominative pronoun, it has to be interpreted as animate, like any other overt pronoun in Spanish in an agreement relation (O&R 2013a). Following Richards (2014), we assume that animacy in pronouns is encoded as a person feature. Therefore, as proposed in (50), *se* is equipped to check person agreement in T. However, its ability to bind anaphoric determiners but not 3rd person pronouns shows that the person feature is underspecified and thus too weak to corefer with elements “heavily” specified (section 3.2). This underspecification equates to lacking a specific value, either 1st, 2nd or 3rd person in the computational component. The observation that *se*’s interpretation is determined on pragmatic factors (44) supports the same conclusion.

Any approach to agreement must include some feature valuing mechanism where T ends up mapping the set of \varnothing features of the subject, independently of how the syntactic feature checking mechanism is implemented. Thus, T shows 1st person singular agreement when the subject is 1st person singular, etc. The agreement process in SECs is by all criteria a regular one and, consequently, T’s features are fully checked syntactically. But as a result of that syntactic process, the morphological exponent of T lacks a number specification by virtue of agreeing with a subject, *se*, that lacks a value for this feature. The mere existence of

³³ In the Italian tradition, there is more discussion on the number features of *se*. Napoli 1976, Belletti 1982, Burzio 1986, among others, propose that *se* is singular while Chierchia 1995 argues that it is semantically plural. See also D’Alessandro 2007 and references for discussion.

a 3rd person defective V agreement form in all impersonal contexts, where no possible number agreement-checking argument is available and still the result is grammatical, may be taken as evidence that number agreement does not need to be valued. In other words, we assume a single syntactic cycle where *se* suffices to check the whole ϕ feature set and, consequently, to get nominative Case. Note, furthermore, that empirical evidence presented in section 2.1 strongly supports this view: if there were a second cycle (Rezac 2003, Anagnostopoulou 2003, 2005, and Bejar & Rezac 2009, among many others), we would expect underspecified features to be available for agreement to proceed with the object, showing a consistent pattern, contrary to facts. If, as argued, number agreement in transitive contexts and with non-arguments is not syntactic, not only second cyclic agreement cannot be imposed over the derivation, but in fact, it must be prevented.³⁴

Given the discussion so far, the asymmetries between postverbal and preverbal positions correspond syntactically to the difference between *in situ* and clitic left dislocated objects in regular transitive clauses. As we discuss next, the postverbal DP pattern is not very different from what we see in contexts such as Icelandic quirky subject configurations (see section 5.2 below and references there). On the other hand, the clitic's behavior is closer to some morphological agreement displacement processes known in various languages. From the discussion so far it should be clear by now that none of these effects may occur in narrow syntax.

5. Post-syntactic processes

In section 2 we showed that agreement patterns behave differently depending on the position of the object. With preverbal topics, its morphological manifestation is obligatory, either as an object clitic or as subject agreement. In contrast, with postverbal ones the only morphological device used is subject number agreement, but this relation is established in a semi-random fashion. Since their behavior is sharply different, we assume that each one follows a different path. For preverbal/null topics we assume that the A-position is occupied by a clitic, which in some dialects mutates post-syntactically into subject agreement (section 5.1). For postverbal ones, we propose that the verb may show up marked with a morphological default singular number, or it may harmonize with a plural element following it (section 5.2).

³⁴ This fact has important consequences for the treatment of agreement restrictions, especially those phenomena associated to the Object Agreement Constraint (the Person-Case Constraint and its extensions). See O&R 2007, 2013b, 2019b for some evidence that similar facts to those described here are also present in PCC contexts.

5.1. Dialectal variation at PF: clitic mutation

The pronoun *se* is the only subject clitic in Spanish. It cliticizes into T just in the same way French *il* ('he') or impersonal *on* ('somebody'/'you' indefinite) do. Similarly, the determiner head *lo(s)/la(s)* ('the') in object position cliticizes into the verbal complex. We see no compelling reason to assume that D-cliticization takes place in the syntax, and we propose that it is a post-syntactic operation, but nothing important hinges on that assumption. The result of the computational component's inner workings is a prosodic unit that includes the two clitics, the verbal root and the morphological realization of T.

- (59) *se* + *los* + *censur* + *ó*
 SE + Cl.masc.pl + *censur* + **simple past.ind.3 sg/default subject agreement**
 'They were censored'

The presence of the clitic, instead of an agreement marker, in C-varieties is then the straight manifestation of the structure in (59), with no additional changes:

- (60) (Los documentos) *se* *(*los*) *censuró*
 DP_{Topic}.pl SE Cl.3Opl.masc V.sg
 'The documents were censored'

We propose that in the alternative variety, where the clitic is substituted by subject number agreement, this agreement is just a different morpho-phonological manifestation of the same underlying object clitic in (57), consequence of the process we have termed *clitic mutation*:

- (61) (Los documentos) *se* *los* *censuró* > *se* *censuraron*
 DP_{Topic}.pl SE **Cl.3Omasc.pl** V.sg > SE **V.pl**
 'The documents were censored'

Clitic mutation, (61), is the prevailing derivation in A-varieties, and is also possible in C-varieties, where its application is optional (sec. 2.2). In what follows, we first present direct evidence supporting this analysis (5.1.1); second, we present the mechanism of clitic mutation and its domain of application in detail (5.1.2). To finish, we provide independent crosslinguistic evidence in favor of our proposal (5.1.3).

5.1.1 Evidence for clitic mutation

As mentioned in the introduction, strong evidence in favor of this proposal comes from the behavior of clitics in ClClimb contexts. All dialects of Spanish uniformly show enclisis to the embedded infinitive when the clitic appears downstairs (62a). However, when it climbs and reaches the finite verb, there is a split: in C-varieties the clitic may be maintained (62b), while in A-varieties it shows up as subject agreement (62c).

- (62) a. *se* *intentó* *censurarlas* *All dialects*
 SE tried.sg to.censor.Clfem.pl.

- b. se las intentó censurar *C-varieties*
SE **Clfem.pl** tried.**sg** to.censor
- c. se intentaron censurar *A-varieties*
SE tried.**pl** to.censor
'Somebody or other tried to censor them'

The parallelism is maintained across the board. In long distance ClClimb, A-varieties maintain the clitic in all the intermediate positions (63a-c), and mutate it into agreement only when it reaches the *se* clause (63d):³⁵

- (63) a. Se tiene que empezar a poder entender **.los**
SE must.**sg** that begin.infin to can.infin understand.infin.**Clmasc.pl**
- b. se tiene que empezar a poder. **.los** entender
SE must.**sg** that start.infin to can.infin.**Clmasc.pl** understand.infin
- c. ??se tiene que empezar. **.los** a poder entender
SE must.**sg** that start.infin.**Clmasc.pl** to can.infin understand.infin
- d. se tienen que empezar a poder entender
SE must.**pl** that start.infin to can.infin understand.infin

That is exactly what clitic mutation predicts. A P-SECs/I-SECs analysis, on the other hand, would be forced to explain why ClClimb is impossible only in the last step, just in the domain of SECs. In its place, a strange P-SEC that passivizes a deeply embedded object, which gets accusative case on itself from *entender*, may/must be created each time a clitic climbing structure that should be possible has been mysteriously blocked, a rather strange distribution of facts. Moreover, the presence of the underlying clitic is also supported by the fact that upstairs agreement is subject to all the constraints clitic climbing shows in parallel contexts. First, clitic mutation exhibits all the island effects ClClimb does. (64) and (65) illustrate the parallelism in adjunct wh-island contexts, and (66)-(67) the intervention effect with a negative head.

- (64) a. Sabemos leerlas
know.we read.Cl.fem.pl
- b. Las sabemos leer
Cl.fem.pl know.we read
- c. Sabemos cómo leerlas
know.we how to.read.Cl.fem.pl
- d. *Las sabemos cómo leer
Cl.fem.pl know.we how to.read
'We know how to read them'

35 Example (61c) sounds a bit odd to us, and our informants have the same impression. Note however, that the corresponding sentence with a subject fully specified for person sounds as marginal:

- (i) a. ??Tenemos que empezar. **los** a poder entender
'We must begin to be able to understand them'

Whatever the reason for this marginality is, paradigms with *se* and with fully specified subjects behave in the same way even in this respect.

- (65) a. Se sabe leerlas
SE know.**sg** read.Cl.fem.pl
- b. Se saben leer
SE know.**pl** read
- c. Se sabe cómo leerlas
SE know.**sg** how to.read.Cl.fem.pl
- d. *Se saben cómo leer
SE know.**pl** how to.read
'One knows how to read them'
- (66) a. intenté hacerlos
try.I to.do.Clmsc.pl
- b. Los intenté hacer
Clmsc.pl try.I to.do
- c. Intenté no hacerlos
try.I not to.do.Clmsc.pl
- d. *Los intenté no hacer
Clmsc.pl try.I not to.do
'I tried (not) to do them'
- (67) a. Se intentó hacerlos
SE try.**sg** to.do.Clmsc.pl
- b. Se intentaron hacer
SE try.**pl** to.do
- c. Se intentó no hacerlos
SE try.**sg** not to.do.Clmsc.pl
- d. *Se intentaron no hacer
SE try.**pl** not to.do
'One tried (not) to do them'

In addition, clitic mutation also shows clitic clustering effects: in ClCl contexts, when more than one clitic is generated in the embedded domain, they cannot be separated in two domains and the entire cluster must climb together (68). The paradigm in (69) fully parallels the clitic pattern in (68), as expected if clitic mutation has applied. In contrast, if it were true subject agreement, the ungrammaticality of (69b) would be completely unexpected, since subject agreement does not interfere with clitics in general contexts (68a, d):

- (68) a. Intentaron censurártelas
tried.they to.censor.Cl2sg.Clfm.pl
- b. *Las intentaron censurarte
Clfm.pl tried.they to.censor.Cl2sg
- c. *Te intentaron censurarlas
Cl2sg tried.they to.censor.Clfm.pl
- d. Te las intentaron censurar
Cl2sg Clfm.pl tried.they to.censor
'They tried to censor them to you'
- (69) a. Se intentó censurártelas
SE tried.**sg** to.censor.Cl2sg.Clfm.pl
- b. *Se intentaron censurarte

- SE tried.**pl** to.censor.Cl2sg
 c. *Se te intentó censurarlas
 SE Cl2sg tried.**sg** to.censor.Clfm.pl
 d. Se te intentaron censurar
 SE Cl2sg tried.**pl** to.censor
 ‘Someone tried to censor them to you’

A different piece of evidence comes from idiomatic expressions containing a non referential clitic, such as *liarla parda* (‘to make a complete mess’), *cagarla* (‘to fuck it up’), *matarlas callando* (‘to go about things slyly’), *pasarlas canutas* (‘to have a rough time’),³⁶ *verlas venir* (‘to see them coming’), etc. The clitic is part of the idiomatic expression and must be present under all circumstances (70) (García-Page 2010 and references). As expected, passivization is completely impossible (71):

- (70) a. En esos pueblos, siempre *(la) liamos parda
 In those villages, always Clfm.**sg** mishandle.we brown.**sg**
 ‘In those villages we always make a complete mess’
 b. En la guerra, siempre *(las) pasamos canutas
 During the war, always Clfm.pl pass.we canutas
 ‘During the war we always have a rough time’
- (71) a. * En esos pueblos, siempre es liada parda (por nosotros)
 In those villages, always is mishandled.fm.sg brown.**sg** (by us)
 ‘In those villages we always make a complete mess’
 b. * En la guerra, siempre son pasadas canutas (por nosotros)
 During the war, always Clfm.pl pass.we canutas
 ‘During the war we always have a rough time’

Non-paradigmatic SECs are the only exception where the clitic disappears. In those cases, which sound absolutely natural, if the clitic of the idiom is singular the verbal form shows up in singular (72a), and if plural, it is obligatorily plural (72b).

- (72) a. En esas fiestas, siempre se *lia parda*
 In those villages, always SE mishandle.**sg** brown.**sg**
 ‘In those villages people always make a complete mess’
 b. En la guerra, siempre se *pasan canutas*
 During the war, always SE pass.**pl** canutas.**pl**
 ‘During the war people always have a rough time’

As far as we can see, that distribution of facts only makes sense if the missing clitic is disguised as agreement in SECs, via clitic mutation.

5.1.2 The mechanism of clitic mutation and its domain of application

Recall that *se* is animate obligatorily, thus minimally specified for person features, and has no number features (section 3.2). As a result, the morphological exponent of the T head agreeing with it lacks a number feature value (section 4.3). That is the context where clitic

³⁶ In contemporary Spanish, the word *canutas* does not exist apart from this idiom.

mutation applies in the morphological component: in such a situation, the object clitic mutates and takes the form and position of subject number agreement (73).

- (73) (Los documentos) se los censuró > se censuraron [= (61)]
 DP_{Topic}.pl SE Cl.3O_{masc}.pl V.sg > SE V.pl
 ‘The documents were censored’

The operation is optional in C-varieties and mostly obligatory in A-varieties. If the possible domain of application of phenomena like clitic mutation is restricted to contexts where the underspecification of the features in T leaves room for it to apply, the contrast between inanimate clitics (*lo(s)/la(s)*), which mutate, and animate ones, which never do, is also predicted straightforwardly.

Consider the distribution of the clitic/agreement strategies for pronominal objects

(74) and, in general, for [+DOM] (75), vs. [-DOM] (61) objects:

- (74) a. A vosotros (Juan) *(os) censuró [= (58a-c)]
 DOM you (Juan) Cl.2.pl. censored.sg
 ‘As for you, John censored you’
 b. A vosotros se *(os) censuró
 DOM you SE Cl.2.pl. censored.sg
 ‘As for you, you were censored’
 c. *A vosotros se censurasteis [$<$ A vosotros se os censuró]
 DOM you SE censored. 2.pl
- (75) a. A las oponentes políticas (Juan) *(las) censuró
 DOM DPpl. (Juan) Cl.ac.pl. V.sg
 b. A las oponentes políticas se *(las) censuró [= (30a)]
 DOM DPpl. SE Cl.ac.pl. V.sg
 ‘The political opponents were censored’
 c. *A las oponentes políticas se censuraron [= (30b)]
 DOM DPpl. SE Cl.ac.pl. V.pl
 ‘The political opponents were censored’

Unlike number, person agreement has been valued between *se* and T (section 4.3) and this feature is not available as a target to trigger the morphological process. The immediate consequence is that pronominal objects may not be subject to mutation (74c), since they would create a feature conflict, but must remain as clitics (74b). Given that [+DOM] objects also have person features,³⁷ they may not be subject to mutation (75c) either, and follow the same pattern as pronominal objects.³⁸ In more general terms, clitic mutation will then be

37 For instance, O&R (2007) argue that in standard *leísta* dialects the object clitic *le* corresponds to masculine [+DOM] objects. This clitic behavior patterns with 1st and 2nd person with respect to the Person Case Constraint, a typical agreement constraint.

38 Two reviewers raise the question of why many non-*leísta* speakers make use of the clitic *le* in these particular contexts. Observe first that this generalized use of the clitic *le* poses a problem to virtually all approaches, since it specifically arises in I-SECs, commonly analyzed as regular transitive structures since Cinque (1988). We do not have a full explanation for this fact, but within the logic of our proposal it is most

possible when the lack of number features in the subject and the lack of person features in the object cooccur. That also accounts for the restricted distribution of the morphological phenomenon as a whole. In the general case, where the subject-T agreement fully specifies person and number features, the clitic has no room in T's resulting morphological exponent to mutate into subject number agreement, not even with *lo(s)/la(s)* (74c).

As we discuss next, with some interesting differences, all these are properties that clitic mutation shares with other morphological phenomena crosslinguistically.

5.1.3. Extensions: clitic mutation in a broader morphological context

Clitic mutation is not the only case where morphological interactions between subject agreement and object clitics shows up in Spanish. As Table 1 illustrates, certain subject agreement-object clitic combinations in Spanish are not possible.³⁹

	1s	2s	3s	1p	2p	3p
1s	me vi	te vi	la vi	*nos vi	os vi	los vi
2s	me viste	te viste	lo viste	nos viste	*os viste	las viste
3s	me vio	te vio	la/se vio	nos vio	os vio	los/ *se vio
1p	*me vimos	te vimos	la vimos	nos vimos	os vimos	los vimos
2p	me visteis	*te visteis	la visteis	nos visteis	os visteis	las visteis
3p	me vieron	te vieron	la/ *se vieron	nos vieron	os vieron	los/se vieron

Table 1. Subject agreement-object clitic interactions in Spanish

These restrictions do not seem to have a syntactic origin, given the fact that the same combinations rejected in Spanish are possible in other languages, including English (76b). In other words, the contexts where clitic mutation arises is independently motivated to explain other interactions in Spanish, in this case, a restriction against “same person but different number” combinations.

- (76) a. *nos llevé a casa
 1Opl. take.1sg to home
 b. I will take us home

Neither is the phenomenon of clitic mutation crosslinguistically an isolated one. It may be compared to the family of phenomena known as *agreement displacement* in the morphology of many languages. To illustrate, in Basque, for instance, when the verbal form

probably linked to the blocking effects on clitic mutation compelled by clitics specified for person features. As observed in the literature (Fernández Ordóñez 1999; O&R 2013a), there are syntactic reasons to postulate two different 3rd person clitics, one animate and one inanimate, even in non-*leísta* dialects (also in feminine gender). Given the fact that inanimate *lo* mutates into subject agreement, SECs constitute a context where the behavior of animate and inanimate object clitics diverge radically. This context provides a scenario where Morphology could choose a more specific form. Also note that there is no syntactic or interpretive effect associated with the use of the clitic *lo(s)/la(s)* or *le(s)* in these contexts, where they are uniformly interpreted as animate clitics. Note, furthermore, that *le* is not a dative clitic, since in most dialects it alternates with the feminine accusative one. We must leave this issue for further research.

³⁹ Notice that some of the combinations marked for 3rd person in the table are possible with a reflexive interpretation; that is, [3rd+ α number Subj agr. + 3rd+ α number Obj clitic], but the two combinations that are ruled out correspond to singular-plural combinations, both impossible.

fulfills certain morphological conditions, ergative agreement takes the form and position of absolutive agreement (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Laka 1993, Albizu & Eguren (2000), Fernández & Albizu (2000), Arregi & Nevins 2012, among others). In order for agreement displacement to take place, the main condition is for the absolutive to be third person (77c,d) vs. (77a,b). If the absolutive object lacks person, in the same way T lacks number, then absolutive agreement morphology may be ‘colonized’ by ergative one in a process essentially equivalent to clitic mutation. :

- (77) a. Nik zu maite **z-** intu -da -n
 I.erg you.abs love **2abs-aux-1erg-past**
 ‘I loved you’
- b. Zuk ni maite **n-** indu-zu -n
 You.erg I.abs love **1abs-aux-2erg-past**
 ‘You loved me’
- c. Zuk bizitza maite **z-** enu -en (vs. *u -**zu.n**)⁴⁰
 You.erg life.abs love **2erg-aux-past** (aux-**2erg-past**)
 ‘You loved life’
- d. Nik bizitza maite **n-** u -en (vs. *u-**da-n**)
 I.erg life.abs love **1erg-aux-past** aux-**1erg-past**
 ‘I loved life’

As is the case of virtually all proposals concerning the agreement facts in *SECs*, current analyses of agreement displacement phenomena mostly lay out syntactic solutions (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Rezac 2008, Béjar & Rezac 2009, a.o.). However, all these phenomena present similar contextual restrictions, suggesting a unified morphological analysis. In addition, in the case of agreement displacement, there is a long tradition of morphology-based explanations (Laka 1993, Albizu & Eguren 2000, Arregi & Nevins 2012). Finally, the differences between them (e.g. the fact that first and second person undergo ergative displacement in Basque but not clitic mutation in Spanish) follow from the different morphological specifications of the host exponents in each case. We leave the possibility of unifying clitic mutation and agreement displacement within a single post-syntactic analysis for further research.

5.2. A Processing/PF phenomenon (II): number harmony

Our analysis of clitic mutation applies only to those structures where clitics appear. In general terms [-DOM] object DPs may not be doubled by the clitics *lo(s)/la(s)* (‘him/her/them’) in Spanish (35) except for CLLD and a few other contexts that are not relevant here. Consequently, number agreement with postverbal objects cannot be an

40 3rd person absolutive is \emptyset in Basque.

instance of clitic mutation. From a syntactic point of view, since it does not have any of the properties expected from a well-behaved syntactic checking relation, as extensively argued in section 2, it is thus inconceivable the relation between V and a postverbal [-DOM] object to involve person agreement. The only aspect in which syntax seems to play a role is that, as with clitic mutation, the triggering conditions involve lack of number agreement features in the morphological exponent of the T agreeing with *se*. In sum, the computational component hands over to PF the following structure:

- (78) *se* + *censur* + *ó* los documentos
 SE + *censur* + **past.3p/unspecified number agreement** the documents
 ‘The documents were censored’

Post-syntactically, for reasons to be determined, in some cases T’s unspecified number agreement adopts the value of the closest nominal (Gallego 2016). We have called this operation ‘number harmony’. In other cases T adopts a default singular value. This explains why when the closest nominal is singular, T never shows up in plural.

A similar approach might be conceived for other contexts where the same number agreement variability arises. For instance, in a well known paper on Icelandic agreement, Sigurdsson & Holmberg (2008) [henceforth S&H] distinguish three varieties in the language concerning the status of number agreement in DAT-NOM constructions of the type illustrated in (79) [S&H ex. (7)]:

- (79) a. * *Honum líkum við.* *1P AGR
 him.DAT like.1PL we.NOM
 b. * *Honum líkið þið.* *2P AGR
 him.DAT like.2PL you.NOM.PL
 c. *Honum líka þeir.* ok3P AGR
 him.DAT like.3PL they.NOM
 ‘He likes them.’

All speakers without distinction consider first and second person nominative arguments ungrammatical (79a-b). Third person singular and plural are possible, but agreement with the plural varies considerably: some speakers (variety C) disallow agreement in all contexts; for variety B speakers, plural agreement is allowed, unless a dative intervenes between the verb and the nominative object (see below). Finally, speakers of variety A allow plural agreement in most cases even where the dative intervenes. The authors go further to acknowledge that the three-way distinction does not do justice to the real mosaic of variation among speakers:

“However, ‘Icelandic A’, ‘Icelandic B’ and ‘Icelandic C’ are to a certain extent idealizations, since we mostly take only the clearest extremes into account. There is considerable variation ‘in between’ these extremes, to which we cannot do any justice here, although we mention some of it.” (S&H, fn. 4)

It seems to us that this variability is reminiscent of the situation we have been discussing throughout the paper for sentences with *se* in subject position. It is interesting to observe that their explanation is designed to account for the most restrictive variety as the core case, and additional mechanisms (including intrinsic ordering of movement rule applications) are built in to weaken that possibility and leave some room for the varieties. That is also the strategy followed in syntactic accounts of number agreement in *SECs*. Given what we have argued so far, a much more restrictive syntax is possible if no number agreement holds and post syntactic mechanisms introduce it in quirky agreement contexts. There are two additional ingredients in their analysis that support this view: long distance number agreement with 1st/2nd person arguments, and intervention effects with *seem* verbs.

First they observe that although first and second person nominative objects are completely banned in the simplex DAT-NOM constructions (79a-b), they are allowed in what they call the *complex ECM-DAT constructions*. In those contexts, nominative first and second person arguments are allowed in the embedded subject as long as they do not agree in person with the matrix T. Interestingly, although person agreement is banned, some speakers optionally allow plural agreement with the embedded subject in 2nd person (80a), not with 1st plural (80b), but only when 2nd and 3rd person plural forms are syncretic [S&H ex (53)]:

- (80) a. Henni virtist/virtust þið eitthvað einkennilegir.
her.DAT seemed.3 SG /2–3 PL you. NOM . PL somewhat strange
‘You seemed somewhat strange to her.’
b. Henni virtist/?*virtust/*virtumst við eitthvað einkennilegir.
her.DAT seemed.3 SG /2–3 PL /1 PL we. NOM somewhat strange

S&H’s way to put it is interesting: “[...] the reason is presumably that *it can be interpreted as agreeing with the 2pl NOM, without unambiguously agreeing with it in person*. That is, speakers can “both eat their cake and have it too (Sigurðsson 1996: 35)” [S&H 2008: 23]

The second fact that suggests this is a post-syntactic agreement context is the variability of the intervention effects on agreement and the repair strategies. Leaving aside speakers that do not allow agreement in these constructions at all (variety C), speakers of varieties A and B differ in that the former generally allow agreement across an intervening dative element, while the latter do not [examples from S&H (15a)-(16a); see Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2003, and S&H for discussion and references].

- (81) a. Það líkuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir Variety A
EXPL liked.3PL one linguist.DAT these ideas.NOM
b. Það líkaði /*líkuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir Varieties B-C
EXPL liked.3SG/3PL one linguist.DAT these ideas.NOM

An interesting fact about this phenomenon is that dative intervention in Icelandic B locks number agreement only if the dative is phonologically realized. The minimal pair in complex ECM-DAT constructions [S&H ex. (4)] illustrates this point: in (82b), the dative in the embedded subject position blocks number agreement; in contrast, when the dative raises to the matrix subject (82a), plural agreement becomes possible.

- (82) a. Henni virðast myndirnar vera ljótar.
her.DAT seem.3PL paintings.the.NOM be ugly
‘It seems to her that the paintings are ugly.’
b. Það virðist/*virðast einhverri konu myndirnar vera ljótar.
EXPL seems.3SG/*3PL some woman.DAT paintings.the.NOM be ugly

From a strict syntactic point of view, it is not obvious why the absence of phonological material should make a difference if, as they postulate, there is a copy of the preposed dative still intervening in the lower position. Moreover, it is not clear how to make intervention disappear for number but not for person agreement, as they acknowledge. This is particularly important considering that their analysis of the Person Restriction heavily relies on intervention as the central reason. Even assuming that there is a syntactic explanation, it is not clear why the repair strategy would work for some speakers but not for others. On the other hand, effects of this type have often been reported in research on agreement intervention in language processing (Zawiszewski et al. 2016, Villata 2017, Mancini et al. 2016). In sum, a more general post-syntactic analysis of a large variety of number agreement phenomena in quirky agreement configurations seems to us worth pursuing, although a detailed analysis goes beyond our goals in this paper.⁴¹

Clitic Mutation and Number Harmony show very different properties. One clear difference is the lack of systematicity of Number Harmony discussed in section 2. Consider now the case of A-bar movement. In these cases V complement appears preposed, as in Clitic Mutation contexts, but in transitive sentences it rejects clitic doubling (83), as in Number Harmony ones:

- (83) a. ¿Qué documentos (*los) censuraron?
b. Los documentos que (*los) censuraron se hicieron públicos

In SECs, these structures exhibit the lack of systematicity typical of Number Harmony:

- (84) a. ¿Qué documentos se censuró/ censuraron?
b. Los documentos que se censuró/ censuraron se hicieron públicos

This is predicted by our analysis because, unlike left dislocated objects, the head of the relative clause or some element coindexed with it (the relative pronoun or an operator) is base-generated in the VP-internal object position. The prediction is largely born out: (85a)

⁴¹ Note that we are not suggesting that intervention effects are not syntactic in nature, but that the constraint uniformly induces lack of agreement and that it is the different ways to “circumvent” this ban that are post-syntactic, most probably processing-based.

illustrates the lack of number agreement with plural objects, (85b) the case of plural agreement with DOM objects, and (85c) long distance number agreement.

- (85) a. [...] *los servicios que se proporciona* a los alumnos [Spain]
the services.**pl.** that SE provide.**sg** to the students
‘The services that were provided to students’
- b. Selección de *las personas a las que se entrevistaron*... [Argentina]
Selection of the people.**pl** DOM the that se interviewed.**pl.**
‘Selection of the people that were interviewed’
- c. [...] *las comunicaciones realizadas o que se prevén* hacer [Cost Rica]
the communications.**pl** realized or that SE expect.**pl.** do
‘The communications realized or those that were expected to be realized’

In contrast, clitic mutation never shows any level of variability. We have conducted a search in Google where we compare the number of hits for a preverbal object with and without agreement and the results radically differ from the previous ones:

- (86) a. “esos libros se venden” = 30.100 hits
those books SE sell.**pl**
- b. “esos libros se vende” = 1 (> 0) hits
those books SE sell.**sg**
‘Those books are on sale’

That is what we expect if (86) is a CLLD context: as such, the required presence of the clitic makes (86b) ungrammatical and plural agreement, via clitic mutation, obligatory. We also extended our Google search to *libros que se vende* (‘books that are sold.sg’), where *libros* is again the head of a relative clause and, sharply contrasting with the null results in (86b), we found examples like the following (also see (85a), above):

- (87) [...] con los libros que **se** vende a través de las plataformas en Internet.
with the books that **se** sell.**sg.** through the platforms in internet
‘(what happens) with the books that are sold through the platforms in internet’

In sum, different pieces of evidence converge and strongly support our analysis, according to which subject number agreement in SECs conceals two different phenomena with very distinctive properties, both occurring post-syntactically. Clitic mutation is a rather regular and systematic morphological process by means of which an argumental Det-clitic shows up morphologically as number agreement. It coexists with a clitic strategy whose distribution is also systematic and predictable both dialectally and in terms of the configurations where they apply. Number harmony, on the other hand, is a very asystematic post-syntactic (perhaps processing-driven) phenomenon, with very vague dialectal distribution. It may be paired with similar processes in other languages and contexts as quirky Case subjects or long distance agreement. They all have in common that the features of the elements that participate in agreement checking in the computational component are only partially specified.

6. Final conclusions

In conclusion, previous analyses of non-paradigmatic *se* constructions in Romance get short of capturing the variation on agreement in Spanish, and are forced to make a structural distinction between passive and impersonal constructions that requires *ad hoc* mechanisms to deal with them. Instead, we present a unified analysis that eliminates construction-based particularities and takes into account agreement and the great variation among dialects and speakers post-syntactically. The weight of the explanation is on the lexical specifications of the pronoun *se* as the subject of the sentence, playing together with regular syntactic mechanisms, which ends up assigning defective agreement properties to T. Variation -- cross-dialectal as well as dialect-internal-- comes from the application of post-syntactic operations to the specific configuration created by syntax: the obligatory/optional application of the morphological rule that we have called “clitic mutation”, and some post-computation number attraction effects subsumed under the notion “number harmony”. Our analysis also helped us to pinpoint a new asymmetry between postverbal and preverbal/null objects that has gone unnoticed in the literature.

If on the right track, the results of this paper open new questions and research ways to deal with old issues on the syntax and morphology, as well as processing, of agreement. An area where much work may be done is in making more precise the syntax and morphology of quirky contexts and the limits of variation at the post-syntactic level. Once we reconsider number agreement facts in those new terms, the possible contexts of defectiveness and its potential to reanalyze many constructions (quirky subjects, long distance agreement, expletives, etc.) are quite broad, as suggested for DAT-NOM constructions in Icelandic. Our proposal also has consequences for the analysis of classical agreement restrictions and their extensions. In particular, if number agreement in many of these contexts is treated as a post-syntactic effect, what Baker (2008) calls the “two-and-a-half agreement” becomes an “at-most-two-agreement” factor, reducing the playing field of possible explanations for agreement restrictions considerably. That is particularly clear if, as argued here, syntactic agreement applies in a single cycle.

Related to the previous point, there is a question that arises on the organization of agreement among the different components in the faculty of language in the broad sense (FLB: Hauser et al. 2002, Fitch et al 2005). The issue is whether the syntactic as well as processing differences between person vs. number vs. gender, and similar cases in the feature system reported in the literature reflect a cartographic structure (Shlonsky 1989; Sigurdsson & Holmberg 2008; Mancini et al. 2016, among others) or rather an “all at once” checking/copying syntactic agreement operation (Chomsky 1995, 2000, among others)

together with some processes in other components. It is worth noting that the two approaches are not incompatible and, in fact, it might be the case that we are dealing with a non-uniform system (see Dillon et al. 2013, Zawiszewski et al. 2016, among others, for discussion). However, if the line of analysis we propose in this paper may be effectively extended, there is room to reinterpret the evidence for separated probes in a more compact syntactic system. Fine grained theoretical and experimental work on the syntax of agreement restrictions as well as on language processing would help clarifying some of these issues.

To finish, as we have mentioned in several places through the discussion, our results on SECs intermingle in a complex way with the analysis of DOM, clitic doubling, and the syntax and morphology of Romance clitics. As we suggested, most of the issues involved are independent of SECs, but these structures are a particularly well fitted tool to reveal new properties of the system of clitics and agreement.

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Appendix: full examples and sources:

Short notes on our searches in CORPES XXI:

i. It is not our goal to present a precise dialectal analysis of agreement patterns in SECs in Spanish but to introduce a broader picture of their (a)systematicity and the range of variation within each agreement pattern, independently of whether speakers allow various strategies or just one.

Moreover, the searches have not been designed to have any statistical relevance. In the vast majority of the cases, the size of the samples is irrelevant, since the overall numbers depend on the frequency of other, more common, structures that coincide superficially with the sequence we targeted, and do not say much about the real frequency of the structure we are analyzing. For instance, a great number of “se V+pl + a (prep.)” cases are inchoative/ unaccusative examples of the form *se acercan a* (‘they approach’) or “inherently reflexive” verbs like *se dedican a* (‘they occupy themselves with’). The search itself was a tool to find instances of a particular frame, and we generally had to delve into the sets of examples to find a relatively small number of relevant ones. But we think that the mere existence/lack of a pertinent number of cases having a direct bearing on the issue under discussion is enough to support our goals.

ii. Yet, when relevant, we tried to obtain as much information as possible about the geographical distribution of the different constructions. In all cases we performed a pre-search where data was organized following the zonal parameter to see whether it revealed some possible dialectal cut. In those cases where either the bibliography on the topic or our pre-search indicated some possible dialectal effect, we included areal and country parameters, to have the information more organized for that purpose, and selected the same number of hits for each country we analyzed.

iii. In the cases in which no worth mentioning results emerged in the pre-search, we decided to run our search with no organizing criterion. By default, *Corpes XXI* organizes the sample chronologically beginning from the eldest instances (2002-2016). That guarantees that the sub-corpus analyzed is as random and hypothesis-neutral as possible concerning all parameters, also including a variety of geographic areas.

iv. Given the size of the corpus, we restricted our search to the “non-fiction” subcorpus, where non-paradigmatic *se*-constructions are much more common than in fiction, and in some cases to present tense, where *se*-constructions are also more present.

1. Lack of plural agreement with plural objects

CORPES SEARCH:

Lema: SE pronombre personal, 3ª persona, Caso inespecífico + **proximidad** + **subcorpus:**

Proximidad: 1. verbo 3ª persona singular, presente [distancia=1 derecha]
2. artículo plural [distancia=2 derecha]

Subcorpus: “no ficción”

Organizado por: zona lingüística > país

Subcorpus: “no ficción”

Total hits analyzed: entire corpus (2779hits in 2012 documents) , covering all linguistic areas, manually analyzed; in each country a randomly selected corpus of 200 consecutive hits.

Results: Numbers are particularly high in Central America (Cuba, Honduras, Rep. Dominicana, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua Panama), and also in Colombia, Venezuela, and the Andean countries (Bolivia Perú and Ecuador and, a bit less, Chile). Fewer but still quite a lot of examples in Mexico, and relatively fewer numbers in Southern Cone countries and Spain. In sum, examples with no agreement appear in the entire hispanic spectrum [no cases were found for Central American Puerto Rico, but the corpus for that country is very small]

■ Examples in the text:

- (9a): S. Noriega. 2001. *Venezuela en sus artes visuales*. Mérida: Ediciones Puerta del Sol.
se recuerda las versiones de Francesco Salviati, del Tintoretto, del Greco y de Pontormo
'The versions of Francesco Salviati, of Tintoretto, of El Greco and of Pontorno are remembered'
- (9b): Venezuela, 2001
[...] las ordenanzas, constituidas por 44 artículos, donde **se establecía las bases del nuevo gobierno revolucionario**.
'The ordinances, conformed by 44 articles, where the basis of the new revolutionary government were established'
- (9c): A. Zaldivar. 2003. *Bloqueo. El asedio económico más prolongado de la Historia*. La Habana: Ed. Capi. S. Luis
Se señalaba los serios problemas que traía para Estados Unidos la aplicación estricta de la Sección 107(b) señalada, [...]
'The serious problems that the strict application of the mentioned Section 107(b) for USA were pointed out'
- (9d): «Una comisión investiga al Viceministro de Vivienda», La Paz (Bolivia), la-razon.com, 2007-1-9
[...] si hay irregularidades, que **se haga los procesos correspondientes**
'If there are irregularities, the corresponding legal proceedings must be opened'

2. Agreement with plural [+DOM] objects

CORPES SEARCH:

Lema: SE pronombre personal, 3ª persona, Caso inespecífico + **proximidad** + **subcorpus:**

Proximidad:	1. verbo	3ª persona plural	[distancia=1derecha]
	2. lema: <i>a</i>	preposición	[distancia=2derecha]
	3. artículo	plural	[distancia=3derecha]
Subcorpus:	“no ficción”		

■ Examples in the text:

- (15a): Instit. de Estudios de Promoción de la Autonomía: *Cultura política en el Atlántico Norte*. Managua, 2001
En 1996 se eligen a las primeras autoridades municipales de las regiones autónoma
'In 1996 the first municipal authorities of the autonomous regions were elected'
- (15b): Guzmán, Humberto: *Los extraños*. México D. F.: Tusquets Editores, 2001
De esta manera mantenían controladas las principales instalaciones civiles y militares, habían ametrallado la fachada del Museo Nacional y se rastreaban a los miembros del Partido Comunista Checoslovaco.
'This way civil and military installations were under control, and they machine-gun the Museum National facade, the members of the Czechoslovakian Party Communist were tracked down'
- (15c): *Arqueoweb*. Madrid [España]: ucm.es/arqueoweb, 2001-12-03
Al iniciarse la menstruación se aislaban a las jóvenes en un refugio donde cumplían con varios tabúes de comida y aprendían normas de conducta apropiada.

‘When the menstruation begins, young women were isolated in a refuge where they keep to several food tabus and learn the rules of proper behavior’

3. “Long distance” plural agreement

We designed a narrow search, where we analyzed the entire corpus alphabetically organized by main verb. Out of the 7160 items, more than three quarters were modals or causatives [*deber, poder, querer, soler; hacer, mandar*] and perception verbs [*oir, escuchar, sentir, ver*]. See results below.

Search:

Lema: SE pronombre personal, 3ª Caso inespecífico + **proximidad** + **subcorpus:**

Proximidad:	1. verbo	3ª persona plural	[distancia=1derecha]
	2. verbo	infinitivo	[distancia=2derecha]
	3. artículo	plural	[intervalo=4derecha]

Subcorpus: “no ficción”

Organizado por: lema primero derecha

Analyzed: entire corpus (7160 items)

Results: the vast majority of the cases are bridge verbs or verbs in the edge of becoming so [*intentar, buscar(7), pretender, desear(9), necesitar (10), pensar, lograr, conseguir (14)*], but there are clear cases with other verbs [e.g. *osar; requerir, valorar*].

■ Examples in the text:

(17a): <http://universidadydiscapacidadeniberoamerica.fundacionuniversia.net/profesiones-nunca-podra-sustituir-robot/1>

En esta profesión **se requieren hacer** *evaluaciones* tanto objetivas como subjetivas de los casos, [...].

‘In this job, evaluations, both objective and subjective for each situation, are required’

(17b) Amanda Mars: “Grecia da por cerrados los recortes y confía en lograr el rescate”, *El País* 2012-02-18. [Spain]

El Gobierno [...] acabó de pactar una rebaja de las pensiones [...] que, según el Ejecutivo, está aún por concretar, aunque **se valoran reducir** *las superiores a 1300 euros*.

‘The Government concluded an agreement on a reduction of pensions [...] which, according to the executive, is yet to be decided, although reducing those higher than 1300 euros will be considered.’

(17c): <https://www.ultimahora.com/esperan-que-cargo-ipta-sea-meritocracia-n333587.html>

Se requieren nombrar a los responsables de la Dirección Nacional

‘It is necessary to appoint National Directorate leaders’

4. Plural agreement with non-arguments

There are intrinsic difficulties to design a search that would give us a general result: a) the cases of agreement with non-arguments is low, and they do not follow a specific pattern, at least not one that might be identified as easily as in the previous cases. For both pseudo-arguments and adjunct-cases we based our results on Google searches, and targeted the ones in Gallego’s and our original example on adjuncts as well as some additional ones, so the search is lexically restricted in this case. In response to an anonymous reviewer’s inquiry, in March 2020 we extended our search to other temporal NP-modifiers.

(21): <http://www.ambito.com/886018-macri-se-reunio-con-periodistas-de-espectaculos-y-deslizo-que-podria-ir-por-la-reeleccion>

Brey [...] aclaró que tampoco "se hablaron de temas de la farándula

‘Brey explained that there was no talk about showbusiness issues’

(22): *ABC Digital*. Asunción [Paraguay], 2004-03-06

Indicó que se deben recurrir a otras figuras para penalizar el hecho punible

(24): Attributed to Juanxu López (LAB) in an interview; *El Correo*, Bilbao 2009/01/18.

¿hay alguna diferencia de ventas entre el País Vasco, donde no se abren los domingos, y el Estado español, donde sí se trabaja?

‘Is there any difference in sales between the Basque Country, where shops are closed on Sunday, and the Spanish State, where they do open?’

5. Clitic strategy

Search:

Lema: SE pronombre personal, 3ª Caso inespecífico + **proximidad** + **subcorpus:**

Proximidad: 1. pronombre personal 3ª persona plural, acusativo [distancia=1derecha]
2. verbo 3ª persona singular [distancia=2derecha]

Subcorpus: “no ficción”

Organizado por: area lingüística > país

Results:

i) In Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia and, very especially, Paraguay and Ecuador there are plenty of examples both with inanimate objects and with animate ones.

ii) In Venezuela there are a few ones, but not many (the entire corpus revised), and in Colombia numbers are very low.

iii) In Central America there are very few cases (e.g. in the entire corpus for El Salvador we found just one example)

iv) All the examples found in Peninsular Spanish involve the feminine clitic *la(s)*, which suggests that they appear in *laísta* speakers, but more work is needed.

■ The corpus is full of coordinated sentences where a new expression is first introduced and agrees with the verb in a postverbal fashion (*se sacan tres cuadros; se compraban huevos*; see section 2.1) and then are referred anaphorically by means of a clitic (*se los coloca; se los vendía*) or agreement (*se guardaban*). In fact, example (B) combines both possibilities in the same sentence.

(A): «Apicultura» abc.com.py, Asunción (Paraguay), 2003-02-12

Seguidamente **se sacan tres cuadros con crías operculadas**, con todas las abejas adheridas y **se los coloca** en cada uno de los cajones que sirven de núcleo.

‘Next, three frames with opercular breeding are extracted with all the bees stucked on, and they are set in each of the boxes serving as nucleae’

(B): «El industrial que la tiene clara» Montevideo (Uruguay), diarioelpais.com, 2001-11-08
[...] hace unos 14 o 15 años **se compraban huevos** en época de producción alta, **se guardaban** en cámaras frigoríficas y **se los vendía** cuando faltaba en plaza,

‘14 or 15 years ago, eggs were bought in high production seasons, they were stored in walk-in freezers and sold when there was need’

■ In a Google search restricted to Peninsular Spain, the sequence *se los mire* is found in different types of journals and publications:

(C) www.revistaceramica.com/detalle2.aspx?id=1486

... sabemos de la propiedad de dos colores que tienen *algunos cuerpos* de presentar dos coloraciones diferentes según la dirección en que **se los** mire

‘We know the two-color property by which some bodies present two different colorings according to the direction they are looked at’

(D): abcblogs.abc.es/.../demuestran-la-existencia-de-los-cristales-del-tiempo-17128.asp

... *los cristales* rompen espontáneamente esas simetrías espaciales, ya que cambian según el ángulo desde el que **se los** mire

‘The crystals break spontaneously those spatial symmetries because they change according to the angle they are looked at’

(E): www.tindas.es/decoracion-de-balcones/

Son *balcones* cargados de belleza que, **se los** mire como se los mire, son únicos.

‘Those are balcon full of beauty, unique no matter how you look at them’

■ Examples in the text:

(34a): Direcc. Gral. de Planif y Ordenam. Territ, *Guía Metodológica para la formulación de los Planes Departamentales* [La Paz (Bolivia), Unidad de Ordenam. Territorial, 2001]

Para efectos operativos *estas ponderaciones se las* realiza por sectores

‘For operational reasons these weightings are made by areas’

fn19.(ia): «Esta noche disfrute la lluvia del cometa Halley» [elheraldo.hn, Tegucigalpa (Honduras), 2011-05-06]

[... estrellas fugaces], y hoy es el día que **se las** puede ver con mayor facilidad.

‘and today is the day when they (the shouting stars) may be seen the easiest’

fn19.(ib): G. Morales-Luna. 2009. *Las Matemáticas y su aplicación en las Comunicaciones Digitales*. *Revista.unam.mx.*, México D. F., 2009-01

Sus funciones primitivas entrañan una complejidad exponencial cuando se las quiere simular por esquemas clásicos

‘Their primitive functions result in an exponential complexity when someone wants to simulate them by classical schemes’

(36a): H. ARIDJIS, *La zona del silencio*. México D. F., Punto de Lectura, 2005

Cuando **se la** desencaja, *la luz de la lámpara* alumbra unas facciones ocres, [...]

When it is disarranged, the light of the lamp illuminates his ochre features

(36b): P. RAMIS, *Esencia prejurídica del derecho*. Mérida, Ed. Venezolana C.A., 2002

En cuanto a *las incorpóreas*, no **se las** veía como cosas, sino como derechos puros.

With respect to the incorporeal ones, they were not seen as things, but as pure rights’

(36c): F. Henriquez Gratereaux 2002, *Disparatario*. Sto. Domingo (Rep. Domin.), Alfa y Omega

Al tratar de actualizar y hacer comprensibles *las palabras del bautizo*, **se las** degrada.

‘When trying to update and make understandable baptism words, they are degraded’

(36d): «Francisco Rodríguez Cascante», itcr.ac.cr/revistacomunicacion, Cartago (C. Rica), 2002-01-03

Por el contrario, si **se los** considera variables, [...]e
'On the contrary, if they are considered variables'

5. Clitic climbing with clitics

Search:

Lema: **SE** pronombre personal, 3ª Caso inespecífico + **proximidad** + **subcorpus:**

Proximidad: 1. pronombre personal 3ª persona plural, acusativo [distancia=1derecha]
2. verbo 3ª persona singular [distancia=2derecha]
3. verbo infinitivo [distancia=3derecha]

Subcorpus: "no ficción"

Organizado por: area lingüística > país

Results: plenty of examples from Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia. Examples are attested in all linguistic areas, although less prominently.

6. Number harmony vs. clitic mutation: relative clauses

Search:

LEMA: **SE** pronombre personal, 3ª Caso inespecífico + **proximidad** + **subcorpus:**

Proximidad: 1. **que** [distancia=1izquierda]
2. verbo 3ª persona singular [distancia=1derecha]

Subcorpus: "no ficción"

Organizado por:

I Examples in the text:

(85a): «EL NORTE VALLADOLID» (El Norte de Castilla) [España]

se valora muy positivamente [...] así como la participación en programas europeos, **los servicios que se proporciona** a los alumnos y la preparación de idiomas.

'It is highly valued [...] as well as involvement in European programs, the services provided to the students and language learning'

(85b): M. Tello & E. Basqueto. 2006. *II Seminario de Formación Profesional*. Córdoba (Argentina), Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto

Selección de **las personas a las que se entrevistaron** para obtener más datos

'Selection of the people interviewed to obtain more data'

I Google search: "se vende" vs. "se venden" (see text for details)

(87): <https://www.silicon.es/submit-la-herramienta-de-comixology-que-permite-a-los-autores-publicar-online-sus-propios-comics-111091>

Algo similar a lo que sucede [...] con los libros que **se vende** a través de las plataformas en Internet.

'Something similar to what happens with the books sold through the Internet'