Chapter 7

A syntactic re-analysis of the Slovenian impersonal *se*-construction

Jakob Lenardič
University of Ljubljana

The following paper discusses the syntactic derivation of the Slovenian impersonal *se*-construction (e.g. *Gradilo se je hišo.ACC* 'People were building a house'). On the one hand, the paper argues for an analysis of the construction in which all the thematic arguments selected by the predicate normally enter the syntactic derivation (e.g. Rivero & Milojević Sheppard 2003; contra Marelj 2004; Grahek 2008). To this end, the paper discusses the construction in relation to the causative alternation (e.g. Alexiadou et al. 2015), which shows that agentive participation is invariably entailed in contrast to the personal variant (*Gradila se je hiša.NOM*). On the other hand, the paper shows that Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) syntactic derivation is set up in such a way that it cannot offer an explanation as to why the construction only allows unergative verbs. In its stead, the paper offers a new analysis of the construction within the theory of the Voice domain (e.g. Legate 2014; Schäfer 2017). The new analysis posits that *se* is the head of an argument-introducing thematic VoiceP and is a separate element from the phonologically-null thematic argument that the construction introduces. Ungrammaticality arises in the case of unaccusative verbs because such predicates merge the null thematic argument within VP yet still combine with *se*, which introduces a participant variable into the derivation that cannot be saturated.

Keywords: argument structure, impersonal construction, reflexive clitics, Slovenian, unaccusative verbs

1 Introduction

The paper discusses the IMPERSONAL *SE*-CONSTRUCTION in Slovenian, as exemplified by (1), in terms of the syntactic representation of its thematic arguments. The

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main morphosyntactic features of this construction, which will be discussed in the paper, include (i) the clitic *se*, (ii) the accusative case on the internal argument assigned by a transitive predicate in absence of an overt external argument bearing nominative case, and (iii) default (singular neuter) agreement which follows from the superficial omission of the external argument.

(1) Celo leto se je gradilo hišo.
whole year SE AUX.3SG build.PTCP.SG.N house.ACC
'People were building the house for a whole year.'

In the formal literature, there are generally two opposing approaches to the number of arguments that are present in the syntactic derivation of (1). The 1-argument analysis (Marelj 2004, Grahek 2008) proposes that the derivation mimics the surface structure, so that the external argument is excluded from the syntactic component and is only implicitly present in the semantics. The 2-argument analysis (Rivero & Milojević Sheppard 2003) regards the structure as containing – in addition to the overt internal argument *hišo* 'house' – a phonologically null pronoun that fills the external argument slot in the syntactic representation and semantically corresponds to the implicit agentive participants paraphrased as 'people' in the English translation.

In this paper, I first present the empirical problems of the syntactic set-ups of such existing accounts. On the one hand, I defend the 2-argument analysis by discussing transitive impersonal *se*-sentences headed by causative verbs, which show that the construction entails the participation of a volitional initiator (i.e., an agent). This fact is surprising on the 1-argument analysis given that causative verbs are in contemporary morphosyntactic frameworks analysed as predicates that are not lexically specified for an external causer or agent and consequently give rise to a non-agentive anticausative interpretation when they do not combine with an external thematic argument during derivation (e.g. Alexiadou et al. 2015). On the other hand, I show that the syntactic derivation that underlies Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) analysis is set up in such a way that it cannot offer a principled explanation as to why the impersonal construction does not allow unaccusative verbs in the case of intransitive predicates.

To account for such empirical gaps, I present a new analysis of the impersonal *se*-construction that is cast within the theory of the Voice domain (Schäfer 2017). The core idea is that the clitic *se* is re-analysed as the head of a thematic VoiceP which introduces an initiator variable into the semantic derivation, and that the null argument is a pro_{IMP} without ϕ-features (Fenger 2018, Ackema & Neeleman

2013; 2018) and with unmarked nominative case (Kornfilt & Preminger 2015). In this sense, the analysis follows the 2-argument account in that all thematic arguments of a transitive predicate normally enter the syntactic derivation. In the case of unaccusative verbs, ungrammaticality arises because such predicates combine with pro_{IMP} within VP to saturate the theme variable, yet still merge with *se*, which introduces an open initiator variable that cannot be saturated.

The paper is structured as follows. §2 discusses impersonal *se*-sentences with transitive predicates in relation to the causative alternation, which shows that a 2-argument analysis fares better empirically than the 1-argument analysis. §3 argues that the inadmissibility of unaccusative predicates is problematic for the core syntactic assumptions of Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) account. §4 lays out the new analysis. §5 is the conclusion.

2 The number of arguments in transitive impersonal *se*-sentences – evidence from causative predicates

2.1 The clitic *se* as a case absorber

In Slovenian, the impersonal *se*-construction (2) alternates with an agreeing personal variant, which generally has the same interpretation if it is headed by a transitive predicate such as *spoštovati* 'respect' or *graditi* 'build' (3).

(2) Impersonal *se*-sentences

a. Starše se spoštuje.
parents.ACC SE respect.3SG
'Parents are respected.' / 'People respect their parents.'

b. Hišo se gradi.
house.ACC SE build.3SG
'The house is being built.' / 'People were building a house.'

(3) Personal *se*-sentences

a. Starši se spoštujejo.
parents.NOM SE respect.3PL
'Parents are respected.' / 'People respect their parents.'

b. Hiša se gradi.
house.NOM SE build.3SG
'The house is being built.' / 'People were building a house.'

Marelj (2004: 268) has proposed that the interpretative equivalence points to a 1-argument analysis of both constructions.[1] Concretely, she claims that *se* indirectly reduces the argument structure of a predicate because it is first and foremost a case absorber (see also Givón 1998; Franks 1995). In this respect, *se* can either absorb nominative case, resulting in the impersonal sentences in (2), or accusative case, resulting in the corresponding personal variants in (3). Crucially, since *se* is a case absorber, it ensures that a DP corresponding to an external thematic argument is excluded from a syntactic argument position in both personal and impersonal variants, so the external argument of the predicates *respect* and *build* is only present in the semantic component and is invariably interpreted as an indefinite group of people in all *se*-sentences.

For Slovenian, this approach to the argument structure of *se*-sentences is also the most recent one in the formal literature, proposed by Grahek (2008). Although Grahek does not offer an explicit formal account, she makes a similar claim that "both personal and impersonal [*se*-sentences] contain the same type of *se* which reduces the human subject role during their derivation" and that "the choice between nominative and accusative/genitive is not associated with any interpretative difference" (Grahek 2008: 44–48).

However, the interpretative equivalence does not hold for all predicates. With causative predicates like *odpreti* 'open' and *potopiti* 'sink', it is only the impersonal variants in (4) that entail that the reported events involved a volitional initiator; i.e., an agent.

(4) a. Vrata se je odprlo (*same od sebe).
door.ACC.PL SE AUX.3SG open.PTCP.SG.N all by itself
'The door was opened by someone.'
Impossible: 'The door opened (by itself).'

b. Ladjo se je potopilo (*samo od sebe).
ship.ACC.SG.F SE AUX.3SG sink.PTCP.SG.N all by itself
'The ship was sunk by someone.'
Impossible: 'The ship sank (by itself).'

(5) a. Vrata so se odprla (sama od sebe).
door.NOM.PL AUX.3PL SE open.PTCP.PL all by itself
'The door opened (by itself.)'

[1] To be clear, Marelj (2004) does not discuss Slovenian data specifically, but rather focuses on other Slavic languages, such as Polish and Serbo-Croatian, in which a *se*-sentence can also surface either as a non-agreeing impersonal or as an agreeing personal construction with the same structural and interpretative characteristics as the Slovenian sentences under (2) and (3). For cross-linguistic examples, the reader is referred to Marelj (2004: 267–270).

b. Ladja se je potopila (sama od sebe).
ship.NOM.SG.F SE AUX.3SG sink.PTCP.SG.F all by itself
'The ship sank (by itself).'

In the remainder of this section, I will argue that this interpretative non-equivalence speaks in favour of a 2-argument analysis of the transitive impersonal *se*-construction.

2.2 The (anti)causative alternation and the impersonal *se*-construction

We begin with a brief review of the recent literature on the cross-linguistic properties of the causative alternation (e.g. Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995; Alexiadou 2010; Alexiadou et al. 2015; Schäfer 2017, amongst others). These authors take causative verbs like *open* to be unique among predicates because they are the only ones that are not specified for a certain type of initiator at the level of the lexicon. As an apparent consequence in English, they can either appear in the transitive causative construction, as exemplified by sentence (6a), or in the intransitive anticausative construction, as exemplified by sentence (6b).

(6) a. Someone opened the door.
b. The door opened.

Sentence (6b) is structurally poorer than (6a) – crucially, it lacks in its syntactic representation a functional projection like *v*P or VoiceP, which in the transitive variant (6a) introduces the external argument DP (Kratzer 1996). This alternation in argument structure is possible because the causative predicate *open* is not lexically specified for an agent/causer (Alexiadou et al. 2015). In this sense, causative predicates contrast with predicates like *read*, which are lexically specified for an external participant and which consequently have to combine with a functional head like little *v* or Voice so as to introduce the external argument. For this reason, a sentence like (7) – contrary to (6b) – is ungrammatical.

(7) * The book read.

In contrast with English (6b), Slovenian intransitive sentences interpreted as anticausatives are additionally marked with the clitic *se*, as seen in the examples under (5). In spite of the clitic's presence in overt syntax, such *se*-sentences do not differ in interpretation from the unmarked variants in English, as shown by the corresponding translations. Since the clitic does not make an interpretative

contribution to the construction, Schäfer (2017), who discusses *se*-anticausatives in Romance languages, analyses it as a semantically-vacuous specifier of a VoiceP (the equivalent of Chomsky's 2001 *v*P) whose head is also semantically vacuous and takes the VP as its complement.

(8) $[_{\text{VoiceP}}$ SE $[_{\text{Voice}'}$ Voice $[_{\text{VP}}$ open door.NOM$]]]$

In the semantic representation, the denotation of the VP in (8) is a function of the set of all change-of-state events in which the door becomes open (9). By contrast, both Voice and *se* denote identity functions that map a semantic argument corresponding to a set of events onto itself (10), so neither makes any semantic contribution (Schäfer 2017).

(9) $[\![\text{VP}]\!] = \lambda e[\text{OPEN}(e) \wedge \text{THEME}(e, \text{DOOR})]$

(10) $[\![\text{SE}]\!] = [\![\text{Voice}]\!] = \lambda P_{\langle s,t \rangle}[P]$

Consequently, when VP combines with the semantically vacuous Voice head and *se*, the resultant interpretation only entails the existence of a change-of-state event in which the door becomes open. That this is indeed how the Slovenian *se*-anticausatives under (5) are interpreted is further emphasized by the admissibility of the *sama od sebe* phrase, which is the Slovenian equivalent of the English *by itself* phrase. This phrase is used to highlight the fact that such sentences denote situations that can be conceptualized as though occurring "without outside help" (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995: 88); that is, without the presence of an agent or causer.[2]

By contrast, the corresponding impersonal variants in (4) are not interpreted as anticausatives, but rather as events externally caused by agents. Crucially, however, such an interpretation does not follow straightforwardly from the semantics of a causative predicate like *odpreti* 'open', considering the fact that such a predicate is taken to be cause unspecified in its lexical semantics and the VP that it projects only denotes the characteristic function of a set of events in which the door becomes open (9). On top of that, Marelj's (2004) 1-argument analysis for impersonal sentences also predicts that a thematic external argument has to be excluded because *se* is analysed as a case absorber. Note that, because of such

[2]Note that, if the *by itself* phrase is not merged, then the event denoted by the anticausative construction is still conceptually compatible with an agent opening the door, as shown by the fact that the transitive sentence in (6a) asymmetrically entails its anticausative variant in (6b) (Schäfer & Vivanco 2016). The point is that the possible agent in an anticausative construction is missing from its syntactic-semantic representation due to the fact that Voice and its specifier make no semantic contribution (10).

case absorption on part of *se*, the syntactic derivation that Marelj (2004: 268) proposes only allows a null expletive in the grammatical subject position of an impersonal *se*-sentence:

(11) $[_{CP}$ door.ACC $[_{TP}$ EXPL $[_{T'}$ SE $[_{VP}$ open ~~door~~$]]]]$

However, if the grammatical subject is semantically null in impersonal *se*-sentences (EXPL in (11)), then it stands to reason that combining the denotation of the VP in (11), which should be equivalent to (9), with those of its c-commanding categories (which make no semantic contribution to expanding the argument structure of the VP) would lead to an interpretation like 'There was an event in which the door became open'. This, however, would be the same interpretation as that of the anticausatives in (5), contrary to the actual meaning.

To get the desired meaning, it rather seems that the VP of the impersonal construction must be predicated of a thematic external argument, just like in the case of the ordinary transitive sentence (6a). Here, the VP *opened the door* combines via event identification (Kratzer 1996) with the external argument DP *someone* located in the specifier of *v*P/VoiceP so as to bring about an external volitional initiator into the semantics of the construction.

This is exactly what the 2-argument analysis of the impersonal *se*-construction predicts. In this approach, Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003: 120) propose that transitive impersonal *se*-sentences have the following syntactic representation:

(12) $[_{ClP}\ [_{Cl'}$ SE $[_{TP}\ [_{vP}\ NP_1\ [_{VP}\ V\ DP_2]]]]]$

The representation in (12) involves two syntactically-projected thematic arguments. While DP_2 corresponds to the overt accusative DP *ladjo* in sentence (4b), NP_1 is taken to be the external argument, which is analysed as a phonologically-null pronoun that semantically corresponds to an existential quantifier over a group of humans (Rivero & Milojević Sheppard 2003: 135).

(13) $\exists x_{[\text{hum}]}[\text{OPEN}(x_{[\text{hum}]}, \text{DOOR})]$

The LF in (13) perfectly corresponds to the intuitive meaning of the impersonal *se*-sentences under (4); that is, 'There is a human (or a group of humans) x such that x opened the door', which is the desired result. What is crucial is that the syntactic derivation of an impersonal *se*-sentence on such an account fundamentally differs from that of the personal variant, which cannot introduce the external argument into the syntax due to the fact that its VoiceP (8) is already filled with semantically vacuous material (10). Consequently, the interpretative difference

between the causative impersonals, which entail an initiator, and the corresponding anticausative personals, which do not, becomes obvious.

In sum, what we have shown in this section is that examples of the transitive impersonal construction with causative predicates support a 2-argument analysis (Rivero & Milojević Sheppard 2003) over a 1-argument analysis (e.g. Marelj 2004; Grahek 2008), as the latter does not account for the discussed interpretative differences between the impersonal and personal variants; that is, it is unclear from the latter account why only the impersonal construction should entail agentive participation.

3 Intransitive predicates and the impersonal *se*-construction

3.1 The data

It has been cross-linguistically observed (e.g. Cinque 1995 and D'Alessandro 2008 for Italian; Ilc & Marvin 2016 for Slovenian) that the impersonal *se*-construction is licit with unergative predicates, but unaccusative predicates are out. Consider the following contrast between the grammatical sentences with unergatives (14) and ungrammatical sentences with unaccusatives (15) in Slovenian, adapted from Ilc & Marvin (2016: 152–154):

(14) a. Včeraj se je plesalo.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG dance.PTCP.SG.N
'Some people danced yesterday.'

b. Včeraj se je cel dan spalo.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG whole day sleep.PTCP.SG.N
'Some people were sleeping yesterday.'

(15) a. * Včeraj se je umrlo v tej bolnici.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG die.PTCP.SG.N in this hospital
Intended: 'Some people died yesterday in this hospital.'

b. * Včeraj se je padlo na teh stopnicah.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG fall.PTCP.SG.N on these stairs.
Intended: 'Some people fell on these stairs yesterday.'

In this section, I will show that Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) analysis for the Slovenian impersonal *se*-construction does not predict this contrast in acceptability.

3.2 The syntax of impersonal *se*-sentences in Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003) and the Unaccusative Hypothesis

On Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) account, there are two key structural assumptions that underlie the impersonal *se*-construction. Both are tied to the feature configuration of the null argument NP in the bracketed representation (16) of sentence (14a), which is unergative and thus acceptable.

(16) $[_{\text{ClP}}\ [_{\text{Cl}'}\ \text{SE}_{\exists}\ [_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}_{[-\phi]}\ [_{\text{VoiceP}}\ \textbf{NP}_{\textbf{[uCASE][iHUM]}}\ [_{\text{Voice}'}\ \text{Voice}\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{dance}]]]]]]$

On the one hand, Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003) assume that the external argument NP has an uninterpretable case feature that needs to be checked prior to spell-out. Since T, which is otherwise the canonical case-checker in ordinary finite sentences, lacks ϕ-features because the construction is non-agreeing, Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003) furthermore assume that NP bypasses TP and checks its case feature against the clitic by remerging in its specifier, as in (17):

(17) $[_{\text{ClP}}\ \textbf{NP}_{\textbf{[}\sout{\textbf{uCASE}}\textbf{][iHUM]}}\ [_{\text{Cl}'}\ \text{SE}_{\exists}\ [_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}_{[-\phi]}\ [_{\text{VoiceP}}\ \sout{\textbf{NP}}\ [_{\text{Voice}'}\ \text{Voice}\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{dance}]]]]]]$

On the other hand, Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003) propose that NP is a pronoun with a human feature that is otherwise referentially deficient (i.e., NP is a "simplex-expression anaphor" in the sense of Reinhart & Reuland 1993). Because of this assumption, they claim that NP moves to SpecClP, where it repairs its deficiency by forming a chain with the clitic, which is taken to correspond semantically to an existential operator (Rivero & Milojević Sheppard 2003: 129), labelled here with the subscripted $\exists$. Thus in the LF in (13), the quantifier represents *se*, while the bound variable corresponds to the copy/trace in SpecVoiceP.

On such a syntactic configuration, the derivation of the unaccusative sentences in (15) should be like (17), with the only difference being the locus of the initial merge of the phonologically null NP. In this respect, the standard assumption of the Unaccusative Hypothesis (beginning with Perlmutter 1978) is that an unaccusative predicate differs from an unergative one only in that it merges its sole argument within the VP (for instance, Burzio 1986, Alexiadou et al. 2004), and thus dispenses with a projection external to VP (like *v*P in Chomsky's 2001 system or VoiceP in Kratzer's 1996 system) that would introduce the argument in the case of an unergative predicate. Translating this idea into the configuration of Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003), the impersonal construction headed by an unaccusative predicate should be as follows in syntax before movement:

(18) $[_{\text{ClP}}\ [_{\text{Cl}'}\ \text{SE}_{\exists}\ [_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}_{[-\phi]}\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{die}\ \textbf{NP}_{\textbf{[uCASE][iHUM]}}]]]]$

However, since Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's analysis assumes the only relevant syntactic operation to be the remerger of the null NP in the specifier of ClP driven by feature checking/repairing referential deficiency, there is no obvious reason as to why (18) should not result in a grammatical sentence. Note that using this approach the derivation of the argument structure of the impersonal construction with an unaccusative predicate should run in parallel to that of the perfectly licit English structure in (19), where the DP *some people* also starts off VP internally and is then remerged in a higher position.

(19) $[_{TP}$ some people $[_{T'}$ T $[_{VP}$ died ~~some people~~$]]]$

Crucially, the null NP in (18) should also trivially remerge in SpecClP to check its case feature and to form a chain with the clitic, as in the unergative derivation in (17). It seems, then, that such a configuration predicts that the unaccusative sentences in (15) should actually be just as grammatical as the unergative ones in (14).

4 The proposal – *se* is the head of VoiceP

4.1 Schäfer's (2017) Voice typology

To account for the inadmissibility of unaccusative verbs, I will now propose a reanalysis of the Slovenian impersonal *se*-construction that is rooted in the typology of Voice heads presented in Schäfer (2017). Following Kratzer (1996), VoiceP is the functional projection atop VP which introduces the external argument DP into the syntactic derivation. The key idea behind Schäfer's proposal, which is an update of Kratzer's, is that the syntactic and semantic requirements of a Voice head vary from one type of construction to another, as follows: (i) a Voice head can introduce the external argument variable into the semantic representation in several different ways and (ii) a Voice head may or may not have a syntactic need for a DP in its specifier slot. For Slovenian, this approach seems especially fruitful because it provides a straightforward explanation of the licensing properties of the so-called *se*-passives (personal *se*-structures in our terms), which differ from canonical passives in that they do not allow their entailed volitional initiator (i.e., agent) to be expressed via the Slovenian equivalent of the *by*-phrase. To see this approach in action, consider the differences between the feature sets of the Voice heads for the following three sentences, where the first feature in the brackets

corresponds to the specifier requirement of Voice and the second to its semantics (Schäfer 2017: 14).[3]

(20) a. John read a book.
b. Voice = {D, $\lambda x \lambda e[\textsc{initiator}(x, e)]$}

(21) a. The book was read (by John).
b. Voice = {/, $\lambda x \lambda e[\textsc{initiator}(x, e)]$}

(22) a. Knjiga se je brala (*s strani Janeza).
book.NOM.FEM SE AUX.3SG read.PTCP.SG.F on part Janez
'The book was being read.'
b. Voice = {D, $\lambda e \exists x[\textsc{initiator}(x, e)]$}

On this approach, a canonical passive sentence (21) differs from its active variant (20) only in that its Voice head lacks the D-feature, which accounts for the fact that the external argument DP cannot directly enter the derivation. In semantics, however, this self-same Voice head introduces an initiator variable. Since this variable is open, it can be saturated by a DP introduced via the *by*-phrase, which enters the derivation as a VoiceP adjunct. By contrast, the Voice head in the personal *se*-structure in (22a), which does entail agentive participation much like (21a), introduces an initiator variable that is inherently closed off by the existential quantifier. Consequently, merging a *s-strani* 'on-part-of' phrase is correctly predicted to be illicit since the external argument DP that the phrase introduces does not have an open variable to saturate. Finally, since (22b) has the D-feature, the *se* clitic is assumed to be a semantically-null DP that is merged in SpecVoiceP to satisfy this c-selectional requirement of Voice (Schäfer 2017).

As to how the impersonal *se*-construction is positioned within this kind of Voice theory, only a brief speculative account is provided in Schäfer (2017: Footnote 14). Following D'Alessandro (2008), he claims that it is *se* itself that is a thematic syntactic argument that expresses the initiator role in a transitive sentence, in contrast to *se* being semantically-vacuous in the personal variant in (22). However, it seems that this kind of analysis brings us back to the same problems

[3]Note that Schäfer (2017) does not discuss Slovenian examples, but rather uses the following *se*-sentence from French to exemplify the Voice head in (22b) (Schäfer 2017: 16):

(i) Trois maisons se sont louées (*par des touristes) hier.
three houses SE aux rented by some tourists yesterday
'Three houses were rented (by some tourists) yesterday.'

that were discussed in the previous section – that is, unaccusatives should not be disallowed, since if *se* behaves like an ordinary referring DP, there is no principled reason as to why it cannot also correspond to the internal argument of an unaccusative predicate, especially given that VoiceP is not built in this case.

4.2 The syntactic and semantic features of the new proposal

To solve this issue, I will now propose a partial re-analysis of the construction, where the core idea is that *se* itself does not correspond to a syntactic argument, but is rather the overtly realized head of a VoiceP that introduces an open participant variable into the semantic representation.[4] Since I maintain that the impersonal *se*-construction projects all of its arguments into the syntax, I follow Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) analysis in assuming that there is a phonologically-null pronoun (henceforth, pro_{IMP}) corresponding to the external argument within the structure, which is distinct from *se*.

The main grammatical characteristic of pro_{IMP} is that it is structurally impoverished – crucially, it lacks in its morphosyntactic make-up a layer which encodes ϕ-features. Following recent work on the morphosyntactic properties of person features (Ackema & Neeleman 2013; 2018), I assume that it is the lack of ϕ-features that gives pro_{IMP} its idiosyncratically ambiguous interpretation with respect to its person reference. Concretely, this means that pro_{IMP} allows for at least three readings, disambiguated by other sentential constituents or by the context: in existential sentences, (i) it can refer to a group of people that includes the speaker and/or addressee (23); (ii) it can refer to a group of people that excludes the speaker and/or addressee (24); and (iii) in the case of a generic context, it can refer to an arbitrary participant similar in interpretation to the English generic pronoun *one* (25) (see also the discussion in Fenger 2018, where Germanic *man*-type pronouns are also analysed as completely lacking ϕ-features and thereby allowing for the same kinds of interpretation).

(23) Včeraj se je na zabavi ves čas plesalo. Imeli
yesterday SE AUX.3SG on party all time dance.PTCP.SG.N have.PTCP.PL.M
smo se prav super.
AUX.1PL SE just great
'Yesterday, we were dancing all the time at the party and we had such fun.'

[4] This assumption falls in line with the idea that clitics like *se* are categorically ambiguous in that they can either function as full-fledged XP's or X^0's (Bošković 2001: 31). In this sense, *se* can have the characteristics of an XP in that it can be merged as the specifier of VoiceP in personal *se*-sentences (22a) or the characteristics of an X^0 in that it is the head of a VoiceP in our proposed re-analysis for impersonal *se*-sentences. For a similar proposal for the Slovenian negative marker (though with different syntactic repercussions), see Ilc (2011).

(24) Včeraj se nas je obvestilo o novi knjigi o
yesterday SE us.ACC AUX.3SG inform.PTCP.SG.N about new book on
skladenjski teoriji.
syntactic theory
'Yesterday, someone/people told us about a new book on syntactic theory.'

(25) Ko se gre v Italijo, se navadno je pašto.
when SE go.3SG in Italy, SE usually eat.3SG pasta.ACC
'When one goes to Italy, one usually eats pasta.'

The claim that pro_{IMP} is morphosyntactically impoverished is further motivated by the fact that the verbal element which shows ϕ-feature contrasts is invariantly spelled out with third person singular features even though pro_{IMP} typically has a plural interpretation glossed as 'people' (with a contextually determined person reference) in the translations.[5] Compare, for instance, the first sentence in (23), which is impersonal and thus spells out the auxiliary with non-agreeing third person singular features (i.e., *je*), with the second one, which is personal and thus spells out the auxiliary with first person plural features (i.e., *smo*).[6] According to Ackema & Neeleman (2013), such an apparent mismatch between number marking and meaning in impersonal *se*-structures is possible because third person singular represents the default spell-out of ϕ-features, and is therefore compatible with the absence of matching interpretable features in the pronoun.

In addition, the lack of ϕ-features in the pronoun explains a crucial distributional fact of the Slovenian impersonal *se*-construction that has gone – to the best of my knowledge – unnoticed in the formal literature. Namely, Slovenian impersonal *se*-sentences do not allow pro_{IMP} to be used in the structural object position (26). In this respect, Slovenian pro_{IMP} patterns with the overt impersonal

[5] More precisely, the number interpretation of pro_{IMP} actually seems to be ambiguous between a plural and a singular reading; e.g. it is unclear how many people are denoted by pro_{IMP} in (24). However, this ambiguity seems to be expected. In the contemporary semantic/pragmatic approach to grammatical number (e.g. Sauerland et al. 2005), a plural NP makes the same semantic contribution as the alternative singular NP (i.e., both logically mean 'one or more referents'), while the actual 'more than one meaning' of the former obtains through a process of pragmatic strengthening, by means of which the intended pragmatic meaning of the singular NP is negated. Crucially, such strengthening occurs only because a plural NP and the alternative singular NP display a ϕ-feature contrast in number and are seen as competitors for the intended number interpretation. By contrast, the null pronoun in Slovenian impersonal *se*-sentences is invariant (i.e., there is no other null impersonal pronoun in Slovenian with which it would contrast in number), so it does not have a competitor for the number interpretation. As a consequence, the process of pragmatic strengthening does not take place in this case.

[6] Consequently, the second sentence in (23) contains a typical agreeing pro with matching first person plural features as the grammatical subject.

pronoun *men* in Dutch (27a), and contrasts with generic *one* in English, which is allowed in such a position (27b).

(26) * Ta ideja se spominja na vojno.
this idea.NOM SE reminds.3SG on war
Intended: 'This idea reminds one of the war.'

(27) a. * Dit herinnert men aan de oorlong.
this reminds IMP of the war
Intended: 'This reminds one of the war.'

b. This idea reminds one of the war.

(Examples under (27) taken from Fenger 2018: 298)

According to Fenger (2018), the Dutch sentence in (27a) is ungrammatical because *men* cannot be assigned accusative case, as the latter is only compatible with those nominal constituents that are able to project a K(ase) Phrase (Bayer et al. 2001). Crucially, only nominals that contain a rich enough morphosyntactic structure can project a KP. In this respect, Fenger (2018) claims that it is the lack of ϕ-features in the Dutch pronoun *men* that precludes the projection of the KP, whereas English *one* is richer in structure in the sense that it does contain a ϕ-layer encoding person features, and can thus occupy the object position where it gets accusative case.[7]

Note, now, that the proposed lack of ϕ-features on pro_{IMP} has repercussions for how case is assigned in impersonal *se*-sentences. Minimalist theory has generally relied on what Kornfilt & Preminger (2015) call "a positively-specified account of case assignment", which means that nominative case is assigned to the grammatical subject only under ϕ-feature agreement with a specific functional head, which is canonically taken to be T (Chomsky 2001). However, the thing is that if pro_{IMP} completely lacks ϕ-features, then nominative case cannot be assigned to it under the standard agreement relation, in which T, bearing uninterpretable ϕ-features, would find its goal with matching interpretable ϕ-features in the null pronoun.

Recall from §3.2, example (17), that Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2003) circumvented this problem by assuming that nominative case is assigned to the null pronoun under a special variant of A-movement, whereby the null pronoun bypasses TP and checks its case feature against a higher functional projection

[7] According to Fenger (2018), English *one* has a set of ϕ-features that are underspecified for person (see also Ackema & Neeleman 2018). Such underspecification means that the pronoun "must be compatible with any arbitrary choice of person, including the speaker/hearer" (Fenger 2018: 307), which limits its distribution to generic contexts.

headed by the clitic. However, I would like to propose a solution that does not require recourse to such a stipulated modification of A-movement: that is, case assignment in impersonal *se*-sentences occurs configurationally (i.e., not under agreement), in the sense of recent approaches to dependent case (e.g. Levin & Preminger 2015; Kornfilt & Preminger 2015).

For transitive *se*-structures such as sentence (24) and the second clause in (25), this entails that the accusative case of the internal argument DP (e.g. *pašto* 'pasta' in (25)) is the dependent case, which means that it is assigned "in opposition to another argument position" (Marantz 2000: 24); that is, the internal argument DP gets dependent accusative case because it is in a position in which it is asymmetrically c-commanded by another DP (i.e., pro_{IMP}).[8] By contrast, nominative case is not assigned to the c-commanding DP, but "represent[s] the absence of any otherwise assigned case" (Kornfilt & Preminger 2015: 298) and is thus possible when no agreement in ϕ-features takes place.[9] On this account, the syntactic structure of a transitive impersonal *se*-sentence is as in Figure 1, with the dotted line representing dependent case assignment between pro_{IMP} and the overt internal argument DP.

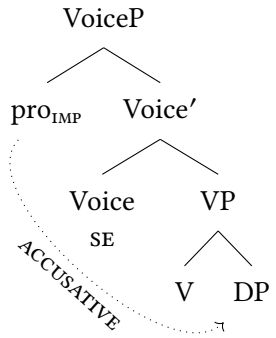

Figure 1: Case assignment in impersonal *se*-sentences

Having dependent case assignment in mind, let's now return to the Slovenian example in (26), where pro_{IMP} functions as the grammatical object in the same

[8] There is an additional requirement: in order to obtain dependent accusative case, the DP must also not be independently assigned idiosyncratic case by a head which imposes its own lexical case requirements, as is typical of prepositions (Marantz's 2000 Disjunctive Case Hierarchy).

[9] For English, Fenger (2018: 313), following previous work (e.g. Schütze 1997), claims that unmarked case should be treated as different from default case, as the latter is spelled out only when the DP is part of a clauseless sentence, as in the exclamation *Me, intelligent?!*

manner as *men* in the Dutch example (27a). In this case, and in contrast with Figure 1, it is pro_{IMP} that is assigned dependent accusative case because it is c-commanded by the grammatical subject *ta ideja* 'this idea', which occupies the SpecVoiceP position in a structure like Figure 1. This kind of structural configuration, however, crashes the derivation, since the morphosyntactically impoverished pro_{IMP} is incompatible with dependent accusative case, which in contrast with nominative imposes structural requirements that the null pronoun, lacking ϕ-features, simply cannot satisfy (Fenger 2018). In other words, it is the lack of ϕ-features that restricts pro_{IMP} to a position where it can only get unmarked nominative case.[10]

Finally, an account of impersonal *se*-sentences has to explain why the external argument is restricted to pro_{IMP} (28a), and why the derivation crashes if a full-fledged referring DP is merged in its stead (28b).

(28) a. Svoje starše se spoštuje.
self parents.ACC SE respect.3SG
'People respect their parents.'

b. * Janez se spoštuje svoje starše.
Janez.NOM SE respect.3SG self parents.ACC
Intended: 'Janez respects his parents.'

At the beginning of this section, I have posited that *se* is the overt realisation of a special type of impersonal Voice head. This assumption is not without precedent, as there are in fact languages in which a Voice head is overtly realized. According to Legate (2014), one such language is Balinese, in which the Voice head in a low-register passive construction is realized as the morpheme *-a* (p. 44). Crucially, Legate (2014) claims that this morpheme does not display agreement with

[10] An anonymous reviewer suggests that the assignment of nominative case to pro_{IMP} may be compatible with an approach which does not assume dependent case, but simply disassociates case assignment, which is still feature-driven, from the checking of ϕ-features (e.g. Bošković 2007). On such an approach, pro_{IMP} would get nominative case by checking its [uCASE] feature against T after moving to the SpecTP position, but in contrast with the traditional minimalist approach (e.g. Chomsky 2001), such case-checking would not hinge on the parallel checking of ϕ-features. However, I am not sure how this approach explains the fact that pro_{IMP} cannot occur in a position where it gets accusative case, given that the valuation of its case feature as either nominative or accusative would simply depend on the type of case-checking head that is available or closest to it (v or Voice for accusative and T for nominative). By contrast, pro_{IMP}'s limited distribution follows on the dependent case approach from the fact that nominative is the unmarked case, and is thus not really assigned to a DP (Kornfilt & Preminger 2015) in contrast with accusative.

the grammatical subject of the passive construction, but rather restricts the ϕ-features of the demoted external argument, which is introduced via the preposition *teken* 'by', to 3rd person. Consequently, a 1st person external argument PP is inadmissible in the construction (29b).

(29) a. Bli Man nyidaang masih tepuk-a teken Made Arini.
brother man can still see-PASS.3 by Made Arini
'Brother Man can still be seen by Made Arini.'

b. * Bli Man nyidaang masih tepuk-a teken tiang.
brother man can still see-PASS.3 by me
Intended: 'Brother Man can still be seen by me.'

(Balinese; Legate 2014: 44)

Formally, Legate (2014: 39) captures these facts by assuming that the denotation of Voice, which is a function that relates an external participant to an eventuality (Kratzer 1996), combines via a predicate modification rule called Restrict with the denotation of the morpheme, which is semantically a function that imposes a restriction on the kinds of ϕ-features that an initiator DP can have. In this sense, the VoiceP of sentence (29a) is as in Figure 2, where Voice not only introduces an open initiator variable, but specifies that the DP realising the initiator has to have the 3rd person feature.

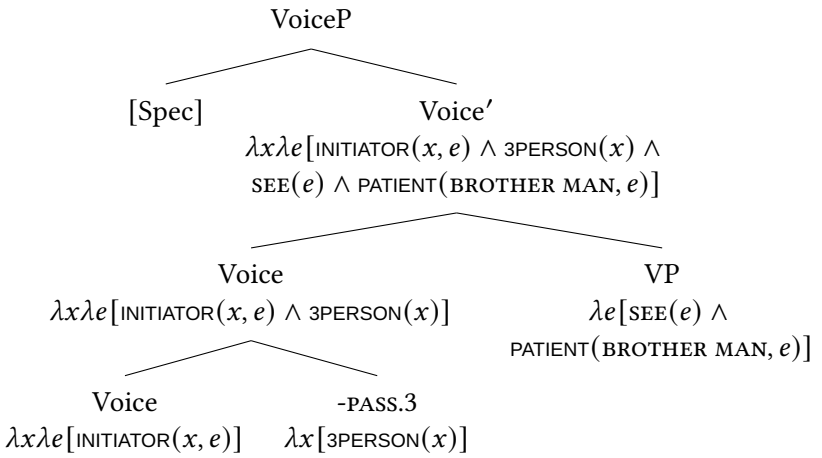

Figure 2: The VoiceP of sentence (29a)

For Slovenian impersonal *se*-sentences, I would tentatively like to propose that *se* operates in a similar manner to the Balinese morpheme, in that it is a Voice

head that restricts the external argument position to an impersonal pronoun, possibly banning all nominals that are specified for ϕ-features. The only difference is that an impersonal *se*-construction is not a passive construction; on the present account, this means that a Voice head realized as *se* has a syntactic D-feature in the sense of Schäfer's Voice typology discussed in §4.1, and thus needs a nominal (i.e., pro_{IMP}) to be merged in the specifier position. By contrast, the Balinese construction lacks this feature, which means that its external argument must be realized as a 'demoted argument'; that is, via the *teken* 'by' phrase, as is standardly assumed to be the case of passives.

4.3 The solution to the unaccusative problem

On this syntactic proposal, the ungrammaticality of impersonal *se*-sentences with unaccusative verbs follows from the fact that – as posited at the beginning of the previous subsection – *se* is the overt head of a VoiceP, so it is an element separate from the syntactically-projected thematic arguments. With this in mind, recall from the Unaccusative Hypothesis discussed in §3.2 that an unaccusative predicate like *die* initially merges its sole argument within VP (in simplified terms, the syntactic derivation of a sentence like *John died* is $[_{\text{TP}}$ John $[_{\text{VP}}$ died ~~John~~$]]$, cf. (19)). It stands to reason, then, that in the Slovenian impersonal *se*-sentence headed by the unaccusative predicate *umreti* 'die' (30a), our proposed pro_{IMP} is also merged VP-internally, as in (30b).

(30) a. * Včeraj se je umrlo.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG die.PTCP.SG.N
Intended: 'Some people died yesterday.'

b. $[_{\text{VP}}$ umrlo $\text{pro}_{\text{IMP}}]$

However, the VP in (30b) then combines with *se* heading a VoiceP, and such a *se* has semantic import in that it introduces an open initiator variable into the semantic representation. Crucially, this initiator variable introduced by *se* is distinct from the theme variable of *umreti* 'die', so the key prediction is that the derivation crashes because there is now an additional open variable that a one-place predicate like *umreti* 'die' cannot saturate. To better see the problem, compare Figure 3, which provides the semantic-syntactic representation of the VoiceP of the licit transitive sentence (1), repeated here as (31), with Figure 4, which illustrates the VoiceP of the illicit unaccusative sentence in (30a).

(31) Celo leto se je gradilo hišo.
whole year SE AUX.3SG build.PTCP.SG.N house.ACC
'People were building the house for a whole year.'

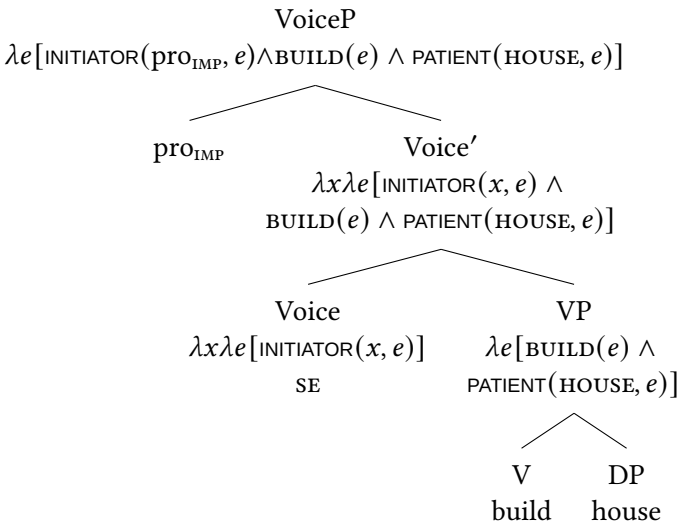

Figure 3: The VoiceP of sentence (31)

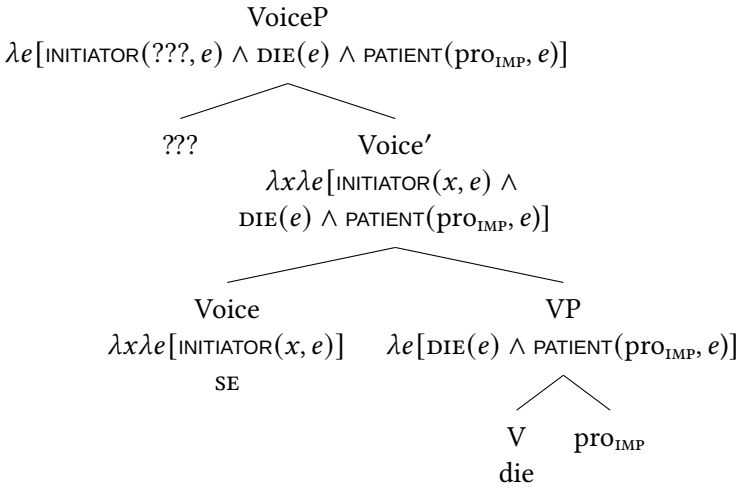

Figure 4: The VoiceP of sentence (30a)

In Figure 3, *se* introduces an initiator variable into the semantics of VP, which by itself denotes the characteristic function of the set of all events in which the house is built. The variable is then saturated by pro_{IMP}, which enters the deriva-

tion as the external argument in SpecVoiceP.[11] As a consequence, the propositional meaning that Figure 3 results in after its higher structure is built is 'People, who acted as volitional initiators (i.e., agents), were building the house', which is indeed how we interpret the Slovenian transitive impersonal *se*-construction. In the illicit structure in Figure 4, however, pro_{IMP} enters the derivation as the internal argument of *umreti* 'die' so as to saturate its patient variable. The resultant interpretation of the unaccusative VP headed by *umreti* 'die' is one that denotes the characteristic function of the set of all events in which someone (i.e., the denotation of pro_{IMP}) dies. The problem, then, is that the θ-requirements of *umreti* 'die' – being a one-argument predicate – are already satisfied at the VP level, so *se*, which on our account invariably introduces an external participant variable, incorrectly turns *umreti* 'die' into a two-place predicate, violating the θ-Criterion. Lastly, one may wonder, as did an anonymous reviewer, why only an external argument is disallowed in an unaccusative sentence, while an applicative argument, such as the dative clitic *mu* in sentence (32), is allowed, observing that a general θ-Criterion-based constraint on argument structure augmentation would disallow the inclusion of both.

(32) Umrl mu je pes.
die.PTCP.SG.M him.DAT AUX.3SG dog.NOM
'His dog died on him.'

Apart from claiming that ethical datives aren't 'real arguments' and thus not subjected to the θ-Criterion, I acknowledge that it needs to be stipulated that unaccusative predicates are somehow able to lexically specify how their default arity can be modified (i.e., by datives, but not by external arguments). In any case, note that, in languages like English and Slovenian, the VP of an unaccusative predicate also cannot combine with just about any Voice head. For instance, if an unaccusative VP merges with an ordinary active Voice head (20b), the result is an ungrammatical sentence:

(33) * Janez je umrl Marijo.
Janez.NOM AUX.3SG die.PTCP.SG.M Marija.ACC
Intended: 'Janez caused Mary to die.'

It seems to me that a system of argument structure that introduces the external argument outside of the VP always requires recourse to a stipulation preventing

[11] The semantic translations of the nodes in Figure 3 and Figure 4 are – for ease of exposition – somewhat simplified with respect to pro_{IMP}, which remains untranslated. Following Ackema & Neeleman's (2018) account of impersonal pronouns with existential readings, I take it that pro_{IMP} semantically contributes an existential quantifier that makes an arbitrary selection from the domain of individuals present in the discourse, which explains the ambiguous person reference discussed in §4.2.

an unaccusative predicate to merge its VP with an active Voice head, especially since the only formal requirement of active Voice is that its semantic argument (i.e., the denotation of VP) is of type ⟨s,t⟩, given Kratzer's (1996) rule of Event Identification.

4.4 Additional evidence – the generic impersonal *se*-construction

What the proposal outlined in the previous subsections entails is that, in simplified terms, an unaccusative impersonal *se*-sentence like (30a) is ungrammatical because an argument is missing in the syntactic structure. That this is so is, I believe, further corroborated precisely by the fact that unaccusatives can also be licit in the impersonal *se*-construction, but only in case their interpretation is generic. Compare the ungrammatical non-generic sentences (34) with the grammatical generic variants in (35), taken from Ilc & Marvin (2016).

(34) a. * Včeraj se je umrlo.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG die.PTCP.SG.N
Intended: 'Someone/People died yesterday.'

b. * Včeraj se je padlo.
yesterday SE AUX.3SG fall.PTCP.SG.N
Intended: 'Someone/People fell yesterday.'

(35) a. Še dandanes se umre od kuge.
still nowadays SE die.3SG from plague
'People still die from the plague nowadays.'

b. V tem hodniku se zlahka pade.
in this corridor SE easily fall.3SG
'Anyone can easily fall in this corridor.'

According to Härtl (2012: 95–97), a sentence that is interpreted generically often allows a lexically transitive predicate, such as *kill*, to be used intransitively (36a). If the interpretation were existential/episodic, such use would generally be ungrammatical (36b).

(36) a. The tiger kills to survive.

b. * Yesterday, the tiger killed.
Intended: 'Yesterday, the tiger killed something/someone.'

A similar improvement in acceptability can be observed in the so-called middle construction, where the predicate *read* in both (37a) and (37b) is used intransitively, in the sense that the external argument denoting the reader of the book is missing from the overt syntactic representation.

(37) a. The book reads easily.
'Anyone can read this book easily.'
b. * Yesterday, the book read.
Intended: 'Someone was reading the book yesterday.'

The general idea behind this improvement is tied to the fact that the generic middle construction (37a) interpretatively involves a dispositional 'property' interpretation, which is ascribed to the grammatical subject (Lekakou 2004). In the case of sentence (37a), such a property interpretation can be observed from the fact that its interpretation corresponds to the paraphrase 'This book has properties such that it is easy to read' (Fagan 1992). According to Härtl, it is this property interpretation tied to genericity that licenses the intransitive use of *read* in (37a), in the sense that "the interpretation of a generic property can assist the [inference] of [the implicit] evaluative entity" (Härtl 2012: 114).[12] This means that (37a) is licit because the generic interpretation allows the hearer to easily infer the overtly missing initiator argument, who is an evaluative entity insofar as he/she can read the book easily due to some properties that it possesses.[13]

[12] To be clear, I do not wish to assume – and, if I understand him correctly, neither does Härtl – that these generic sentences are licit in contrast with their eventive variants because some kind of post-syntactic operation is at work, accessing the syntactic component after derivation and circumventing the θ-Criterion by suspending the predicate's need for a syntactically-projected external argument. Härtl (2012) himself remains quite neutral with respect to how and at which stage of derivation the argument can be dropped. At the end of this section, I propose a tentative solution, following Bruening (2012), in the sense that such sentences contain a null operator that blocks the merger of an overt DP by closing off the open initiator variable introduced by Voice at the stage when the syntactic derivation is still taking place.

[13] Note that the generic context is not the only environment that can license the intransitive use of a lexically transitive predicate. An anonymous reviewer cites the following two examples with the predicate *kill*, which omit an overt internal argument even though the interpretation is existential:

(i) Jack the Ripper killed (someone) again last night.

(ii) Donald Glover killed (the audience) at SNL last night.

It seems to me that sentence (i), albeit non-generic, is licit because it also encourages a property-reading of the grammatical subject, in the sense that its interpretation is like that of a characterizing sentence; i.e., *Jack the Ripper killed again last night, as he is wont to do*. Note, also, that the sentence becomes degraded if the adverb is omitted – ?*Jack the Ripper killed last night*. In sentence (ii), *kill* is used in the unrelated sense 'to make a favourable impression on (someone)'. Such a sense of *kill* seems to be very context-specific (i.e., some kind of performance in front of an audience), so a property-meaning can be more easily inferred from the grammatical subject, i.e. *Donald Glover*, which might explain its generic-like behaviour in that it allows the omission of an overt internal argument.

The generically interpreted impersonal *se*-sentences in (35), which are licit in contrast with their eventive variants (34), also involve a property interpretation. However, in contrast with the middle construction in (37a), the property interpretation is not associated with the logical object but rather with an external source, which causes the logical object (i.e., people denoted by pro_{IMP}) to either fall or die. In this sense, (35a) is intuitively interpreted with respect to the properties of the plague, which is such that it still causes people to die nowadays. Along the same lines, (35b) has the interpretation that the corridor has certain properties such that it causes people to fall. In other words, the interpretation of generic impersonal *se*-sentences roughly corresponds to 'Something causes people to fall/die', and what is crucial is that the syntax we have proposed in the previous section does in fact predict this kind of quasi-two-argument interpretation. This is so because we have posited *se* to be the overt head of a Voice head which invariably introduces its own argument corresponding to an external participant/initiator.

The question, then, is why the generic sentences in (35) are licit if – on the present account – *se*'s formal requirement for an additional argument renders their eventive variants in (34) ungrammatical. To try and answer this, I would tentatively like to adopt a proposal by Bruening (2012), which pertains to the argument structure of the English middle construction. Bruening claims that an English middle sentence such as (37a), lacking a syntactic external argument, is derived via an operator that is defined as follows (Bruening 2012: 30):

(38) $[\![\text{MiddleOp}]\!] = \lambda f_{\langle e,\langle s,t\rangle\rangle}\lambda g_{\langle s,t\rangle}\mathsf{GN}e\exists x[f(x,e) \Rightarrow g(e)]$

This operator, which is merged during the syntactic derivation of VoiceP (Bruening 2012), targets the denotation of an unsaturated Voice projection and maps it into a semantic scope where the initiator variable gets existentially bound. This, in turn, also means that a referring DP cannot be merged as an external argument in the English construction, as its merger would saturate the open initiator variable and thus violate the semantic-type requirement of the first argument of the middle operator in (38), which has to be a function of type $\langle e, \langle s, t\rangle\rangle$.

I suggest that the generic *se*-sentences headed by unaccusative predicates undergo a similar operation tied to their valency. That is, an operator such as (38) targets an unsaturated Voice projection headed by *se* and thereby closes off the open initiator variable. As a result, a sentence like (35b) is interpreted as follows.

(39) $\mathsf{GN}e\exists x[\textsc{initiator}(x,e) \wedge \textsc{fall}(e) \wedge \textsc{patient}(\text{pro}_{\text{IMP}},e) \Rightarrow \textsc{easy}(e)]$

The LF in (39) corresponds to the above-mentioned paraphrase – 'generally, there is an x such that it causes people (denoted by pro_{IMP}) to fall easily'. What is key

here is that the merger of the operator in (38) precludes the merger of an argument in the SpecVoiceP position, just as an external argument DP is blocked in the English middle construction by the operator. This semantic operation, however, is not available with the eventive versions. This means that the only way the unaccusatives in (34) can satisfy *se*'s requirement for an external participant is by introducing a referential argument in the SpecVoiceP position, which is – as discussed in the previous section – inadmissible as it flies in the face of the lexical selectional properties of unaccusatives.[14]

5 Conclusion

On the one hand, the paper has argued that all of the thematic arguments selected by a predicate enter the syntactic derivation of the impersonal *se*-construction. Evidence was given in the form of the causative alternation, since the fact that the impersonal *se*-construction with a causative predicate like *odpreti* always entails agentive participation does not trivially follow from an analysis in which the external argument does not enter the derivation. On the other hand, the paper has shown that the syntactic set-up of Rivero & Milojević Sheppard's (2003) account does not provide an explanation as to why the construction is incompatible with unaccusative verbs. In its stead, the paper has proposed an analysis of the construction in which the clitic heads a VoiceP and introduces an agent variable to the semantic representation of the VP. This variable is saturated by transitive and unergative predicates because they merge a null pronoun in the SpecVoiceP position. Unaccusative predicates, however, merge the pronoun within the VP but do not lexically select for another argument, so the participant variable introduced by *se* remains unsaturated. Finally, I have argued that the licit generic interpretation of the impersonal *se*-construction with unaccusative verbs diagnoses the fact that an unaccusative *se*-sentence is ruled out because of a missing argument.

[14] There is a conceptual issue here: even if there is a generic operator that saturates the open variable in the generic impersonal *se*-construction, then the construction must still somehow circumvent the syntactic requirement that an overt DP be merged in SpecVoiceP, given that it is an active construction in terms of Voice and thus has a D-feature that needs to be checked by a nominal argument landing in the SpecVoiceP position (cf. §4.1). For English middles, Schäfer (2007) claims that the internal argument satisfies this feature by stopping off in the SpecVoiceP position on its way to its final position in SpecTP. It may be the case that the pro_{IMP} in the internal argument position of generic impersonal *se*-sentences moves in a similar manner; however, this aspect of the derivation merits further research.

Abbreviations

1	1st person	M	masculine
3	3rd person	N	neuter
ACC	accusative	NOM	nominative
AUX	auxiliary	PASS	passive
Cl	clitic	PL	plural
EXPL	expletive	PTCP	participle
F	feminine	SG	singular
HUM	human	KP	kase phrase
IMP	impersonal	LF	logical form

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