

The values of Romanian *se*

A diachronic and comparative perspective

The objective of this course is to present an overview of the Romanian reflexive pronoun *se*, focusing on its non-argumental values. The analysis is framed in a diachronic (Romanian) and comparative (Romance) perspective. Due to its multiple values and heterogeneous values (see the overview in Pescarini 2024), reflexive *se(/si)* construction has been the subject of intense research in comparative Romance syntax, especially from a generative perspective.

We start by providing a set of syntactic diagnostics which distinguish argumental reflexive (and reciprocal) *se* from non-argumental *se*, a morpheme which functions as a lexical or as a grammatical formative. Among other diagnostics, the proper reflexive *se* may cooccur with a full reflexive pronoun (illustration in (1a)), in contrast to non-argumental *se* – irrespective of its function/value, non-argumental *se* does not cooccur with full reflexive (1b).

- (1) a. *Ion se lovește pe sine.*
Ion SE hits DOM himself
'Ion is hitting himself'
- b. *Ion se gândește (*pe sine).*
Ion SE thinks DOM himself
'Ion is thinking'

We then turn to the non-argumental values of *se*, which include: *se* as a lexical formative of inherently reflexive verbs (1b); *se* as marker of passive (2) (Cornilescu 1998; Cornilescu & Nicolae 2015) and impersonal (3) constructions (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, revisiting Cinque 1988); anticausative *se* (4); *se* as an obligatory (5a) and optional (5b) formative of unaccusatives (Dragomirescu & Nicolae 2017); and *se* in the reflexive construction (6) (Cornilescu & Nicolae 2021).

- (2) **Se** aduc cămăși la magazin.
SE bring shirts at store
'Shirts are brought at the store'
- (3) Nu **se** vine târziu la serviciu.
not SE come late at work
'One does (should) not come late at work'
- (4) Înghețata se topește.
ice-cream.DEF SE melts
'The ice cream melts'
- (5) a. Planta se usucă.
plant.DEF SE dries-out
'The plant dries out'

- b. Pereții (s-)au mucegăit din cauza umezelii.
walls.DEF SE-have grown-mouldy because humidity.DEF.GEN
'The walls grew mouldy because of humidity
- (6) Ion se spală pe mâini.
John SE washes on hands
'John washes his hands'.

The features of the constructions listed in (1) to (6) above are reviewed in detail, focusing both on their morphosyntax, and on their interpretative (syntax-semantics interface) properties.

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