

Control in se-‘passives’ in Romanian

Ion Giurgea¹ & Maria Aurelia Cotfas²

¹*“Iorgu Iordan-Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics*, ²*University of Bucharest*

giurgeaion@yahoo.com, maura_cotfas@yahoo.com

We discuss control out of impersonal passives in Romanian. The data constitute a *prima facie* problem for Schäfer & Pitteroff’s (2017) generalization that implicit control in passive configurations is possible cross-linguistically, at least with attitude verbs. In Romanian, as copular passives generally disallow clausal subjects, the generalization can only be tested with se-passives, which cannot, however, take active infinitive complements (Dobrovie-Sorin 1998):

- (1) *S-a {*promis/început*} a merge la cumpărături
SE-has promised/begun to go to shopping

Such examples become acceptable if se is replicated on the embedded verb:

- (2) S-a {*promis/început*} a se construi mai multe școli
SE-has promised/begun to SE build more schools

In (2) control must be at stake: aspectuals like *începe* ‘begin’ disallow disjointed subjects, and a raising analysis is ruled out by the absence of agreement with the theme. (2) cannot be an instance of voice restructuring (Wurmbrand & Shimamura 2017): this would predict that personal double passives are allowed, contrary to fact. Analyzing (2) as involving a subject clause (and no control) does not explain the strong preference for se-passives in this configuration (a corpus search revealed that copular passives in the embedded clause are extremely rare).

Our proposal is that se-passives differ from copular passives by projecting an (arbitrary) null external argument in SpecvP, a proposal already made for independent reasons: restrictions on possible themes, due to intervention of the null external argument in case licensing (Giurgea 2016), allowance of definite inalienable possessives, which rely on subject control (MacDonald & Maddox 2018). We propose that the control relation in (2) obtains between the PRO external arguments of the matrix and embedded verbs, via Agree (cf. Landau 2015). Therefore, the {+human +ARB} feature of matrix PRO must also occur on the embedded PRO, requiring the use of the se-Voice.

References: • Dobrovie-Sorin, C. 1998. Impersonal se constructions in Romance and the passivization of unergatives. *Linguistic Inquiry* 29(3). 399–438. • MacDonald, J. & M. Maddox. 2018. Passive se in Romanian and Spanish. A subject cycle. *Journal of Linguistics* 54. 389–427; • Schäfer, F. & M. Pitteroff. 2017. Implicit arguments under control. Talk given at the Cambridge Workshop on Voice, May 22–24. • Wurmbrand, S. & K. Shimamura. 2017. The features of the voice domain: Actives, passives, and restructuring. In R. d’Alessandro, I. Franco & A. Gallego (eds.), *The verbal domain*, 179–204. Oxford: OUP.