Subject doubling in European Portuguese dialects: the role of impersonal se

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1. Introduction

European Portuguese (EP) dialects display a double subject construction where the impersonal clitic se shares with a (plural) strong pronoun, or less commonly a full DP, the role of sentential subject. In the illustrative sentences in (1) the subject clitic se is doubled by a gente, a former DP (‘the people’) grammaticalised as a first person plural pronoun (see Menuzzi 2000, Lopes 2003). In the English translations of the examples in (1), we is to be understood as non-specific, roughly, ‘people here, including myself’.

European Portuguese dialects:

(1)a. A gente chama-se rãs a isto. (CORDIAL-SIN. FLF)
   pron.1PL calls-SE rãs to that
   “We call these ones rãs (frogs).”

b. Chama-se-lhe a gente espigas. (CORDIAL-SIN. AAL)
   calls-SE-it.DAT pron.1PL espigas
   “We call it espigas (spikes of cereal).”

Standard European Portuguese does not allow the double subject construction exemplified in (1). Thus while a gente and se can separately act as an indefinite subject, they are not allowed to co-occur in that role. See the paradigm in (2).

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* My thanks to Jairo Nunes, an anonymous reviewer and the audience of Going Romance 2007 (Amsterdam) for comments and helpful discussion of issues addressed herein.
Standard European Portuguese:

(2)a. *A gente chama-se rãs a isto. (≠ EP dialects under discussion)
pron.1PL calls-SE rãs to that
“We call these ones rãs (frogs).”
b. A gente chama rãs a isto. (= EP dialects under discussion)
pron.1PL calls rãs to that
“We call these ones rãs (frogs).”
c. Chama-se rãs a isto. (= EP dialects under discussion)
calls-SE rãs to that
“We call these ones rãs (frogs).”

The aim of this paper is to offer an analysis of the double subject construction exemplified in (1)^2, and so clarify what makes it available in the EP dialects under observation, while standard EP (like standard Spanish or Italian) rejects it. The facts are interesting from a theoretical perspective since within the generative framework, on which this work hinges, sentences with two subjects (neither of which is left dislocated) should, in principle, be disallowed.^3

The type of se under discussion in this paper differs from the aspectual reflexive found in Spanish (Strozer 1976, Zagona, 1996, Otero 1999, Miguel 1999) in that it is compatible with intransitive (unergative) verbs and is not restricted to sentences with perfective predicates. See (i) below, with aspectual se, in contrast to the examples above.

(i) a. Juan (*se) come normalmente en este bar. (Spanish. From Miguel 1999: 2995)
Juan SE eats usually in this bar
“Juan usually eats in this bar.”
b. Juan (*se) come tortilla siempre que puede (idem)
The paper is organized in seven sections. Section 2 deals with word order. The fact that there is no fixed ordering between the two elements that express the subject makes previous analyses of subject doubling unfit to characterize the dialectal EP construction. Section 3 describes agreement properties of the construction showing that subject-verb agreement does not depend on impersonal se but is set by the doubling nominative pronoun or DP. In section 4, the interpretative effects of subject doubling in the impersonal se construction are considered. It is proposed that the double subject has a compositional interpretation with the strong pronoun or DP acting as a restrictor on the denotative set of impersonal se and establishing its inclusive or exclusive reading. Section 5 draws an integrative analysis of the syntactic and semantic facts introduced in the previous sections. The compositional interpretation is derived under the hypothesis that the double subject results from the splitting of an earlier single constituent, a complex DP, where se is the nuclear element. The particular property of se that makes it irrelevant for subject-verb agreement and Case is taken to be its lack of person. Hence nominative Case rests available for the doubling pronoun or DP. In section 6 independent evidence is brought into consideration in order to support the approach developed in the paper. It is shown that the very same dialects where the double subject se construction

Juan SE eats omelette always that can-3SG
“Juan eats omelette whenever he can.”
c. Juan (se) comió una tortilla él solo    (idem)
Juan SE ate-3SG an omelette he alone
“Juan ate an omelette all by himself.”

It also differs from both the aspectual reflexive and the benefactive/malefactive dative (Strozer 1978, among others), exemplified in (ii), as it surfaces exclusively with the form se while the aspectual and the benefactive/malefactive clitics display person distinctions (e.g. me-1SG, te-2SG, etc.).

(ii) Pepe me le comió la manzana al niño
Pepe me.DAT him.DAT ate the apple to the boy
“Pepe ate the boy’s apple.”

Moreover, the dative clitic is never phonologically realized as se in European Portuguese. In this respect standard EP and dialectal EP are alike.
is attested display other peculiar features pointing to the defectiveness of *se* with respect to \( \phi \)-features, in sharp contrast with what is observed in standard EP.

2. **Word Order as evidence for different types of subject doubling**

   In the double subject *se* construction, the two subject items do not appear in a fixed order. The subject clitic *se* may follow or precede the doubling strong pronoun/DP, as illustrated by the root sentences in (1) – here repeated as (3) – and by the embedded clauses in (4).\(^4\)

(3)a. *A gente chama-se rãs a isto.* (CORDIAL-SIN. FLF)
   
   **pron.1PL** calls-*SE* rãs to that
   
   “We call these ones *rãs* (frogs).”
   
   b. *Chama-se-lhe a gente espigas.* (CORDIAL-SIN. AAL)
   
   calls-*SE*-it.DAT **pron.1PL** espigas
   
   “We call it *espigas* (spikes of cereal).”

(4)a. *Este pode ser a coisa que a gente se diz*
   
   this can be the thing that **pron.1PL SE** says
   
   **peixe-cavalo.** (CORDIAL-SIN. CLC)
   
   **peixe-cavalo**
   
   “This one could be what we call *peixe-cavalo* (a kind of fish).”
   
   b. *O muge é o.que se chama a gente quando anda dentro do*
   
   the *muge* is what **SE** calls **pron.1PL** when is inside of-the
   
   **rio.** (CORDIAL-SIN. ALV)
   
   **river**
   
   “*Muge* is the name we give to that kind of fish when it is found in the river.”

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\(^4\) I take the preverbal non-clitic subject in sentences like (1) to sit in Spec, \( \Sigma P/SubjP \) (Martins 1994, Cardinaletti 1997, 2004 respectively), a position of the high IP field. The post-verbal non-clitic subject in sentences like (2) stays in Spec, \( vP \).
This variable word order sets the EP double subject *se* construction apart from other cases of subject doubling reported in the literature and is left unaccounted by previous analyses. The construction falls outside the scope of the analyses that handle subject doubling as a case of multiple realisation of copies of a movement chain (Craenenbroeck & Koppen 2002, Koppen 2007, for Dutch; Holmberg and Nikanne 2006, for Swedish). It is also not covered by the analyses that derive subject doubling from multiple external merge of distinct lexical items in different subject positions made available by clause structure (Holmberg and Nikanne 2006, for Finnish).

The sentences in (5), taken from van Koppen (2007), illustrate subject doubling in Wambeek Dutch. Here the strong pronoun or DP, functioning as subject, necessarily precedes the co-referring weak pronoun. The Wambeek Dutch construction is analysed by Craenenbroeck & Koppen (2002), and Koppen (2007) as an instance of A’-movement coupled with multiple spell-out of chain links (see Nunes 2004, Corver and Nunes 2007). The subject moves from Spec,IP to a topic position in the CP-domain. Concomitant spell-out of the higher and lower copies (in Spec,TopP and Spec,IP respectively) is an available option because the head of chain differs from the other copies in that the latter do not contain internal structure.5

5 According to van Koppen (2007), lower copies are reduced in the sense that they only contain the features of the maximal projection of the moved item (*the reduced copy theory*).

(5)a. *Zaai gui zaai nuir ojsh.*
   she goes she to home
   “She is going home.” (Wambeek Dutch)

b. *Dei vrou gui zaai nuir ojsh.*
   that woman goes she to home
   “That woman is going home.” (Wambeek Dutch)
This type of subject doubling clearly differs from what is found in European Portuguese dialects. That the doubling pronoun/DP in the EP impersonal se construction is not a topic is clearly shown by the fact that it may surface in post-verbal position (see (3b), (4b)), being in this case preceded by the impersonal subject clitic.

Another type of subject doubling was reported in the literature where the weak subject pronoun precedes the subject DP or strong pronoun. This is the Finnish pattern (see examples (6a-b)), which Holmberg and Nikanne (2006) analyse as represented in (7).

(6)a. **Se on Jari lopettanut tupakoinnin.**
   
   the has Jari quit smoking
   
   “Jari has quit smoking.”

b. **Ne sai kaikki lapset samat oireet.**
   
   they got all children same symptoms
   
   “All the children got the same symptoms.”

(7)\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{FinP} \quad \text{se} \quad \text{[on+Fin [predP Jari lopettanut tupakoinnin]]} \\
\hline
\text{SE} \quad \text{has} \quad \text{Jari quit smoking}
\end{array}
\]

“Jari has quit smoking.”

According to Holmberg and Nikanne (2006), Finnish clause structure makes two positions available for subjects: a position inside the information Focus domain, that is PredP, and a position inside the Presupposition domain, that is FinP. In the Finnish double subject construction, the subject is interpreted as information focus because it remains inside PredP. The

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6 The Wambeek Dutch type of subject doubling is also found in Swedish (see Holmberg and Nikanne 2006) and does not seem to significantly differ from Brazilian Portuguese or French left dislocation of the subject with resumption.
doubling weak pronoun directly merges in Spec,FinP checking the EPP.\footnote{The weak pronoun can only follow the subject DP if the latter is A’-moved to the CP domain because it is a contrastive focus or a wh- phrase, as illustrated below.}

According to Holmberg and Nikanne (2006), the fact that Finnish has two pronouns with number but no person (i.e., \textit{se}-SG and \textit{ne}-PL) is crucial to account for the availability of subject doubling:

\begin{quote}
Why is subject doubling of the Finnish kind not found in all languages? Presumably either because the other languages lack the requisite categories, i.e. deficient pronouns, or because they lack the requisite ‘structural positions’ (Holmberg and Nikanne 2006)
\end{quote}

As for the EP double subject impersonal \textit{se} construction, given the non rigid order of the two subject items, it is not reducible to the Finnish type of subject doubling. Nevertheless, it will be proposed in section 5. that the idea that person-less pronouns lie behind subject doubling is to be maintained. The EP double subject impersonal \textit{se} construction thus lends further empirical support to the proposals in Holmberg and Nikanne (2006).

\section{Agreement in the double subject impersonal \textit{se} construction}

In the double subject impersonal \textit{se} construction, the verb displays agreement with the strong doubling pronoun or DP, as shown in (8) below, where the verb agrees with the nominative first person plural pronoun \textit{nös} ‘we’. Sentences (9a) and (9b) have the first person plural pronoun \textit{a gente} (literally, ‘the people’) in subject position on a par with \textit{se}. The pronoun \textit{a gente} induces variable patterns of subject-verb agreement (see footnote 15), which allows the verb to surface in 3\textsuperscript{rd} person singular (see (1) above), in 1st

\begin{itemize}
\item \begin{quote}
\[\text{\begin{tabular}{c}
\text{CP} \\
Sinäkin, \text{[FinP} se \text{[PredP Sinäkin,} vihdoinkin lopettanut tupakoinnin} \\
\text{you-too} \ SE \ have \ finally quit smoking \\
\text{“So you, too, have finally quit smoking.” (contrastive focus on Sinäkin)}
\end{tabular}}\]
\end{quote}
\item \begin{quote}
\[\text{\begin{tabular}{c}
\text{CP} \\
kuka, \text{[FinP} se \text{[on+Fin} \text{PredP vihdoinkin lopettanut tupakoinnin} \\
who \ SE \ has \ left the door open again?
\end{tabular}}\]
\end{quote}
\end{itemize}
person plural (see (9a) below), and in 3rd person plural (see (9b) below). The two latter options make subject-verb agreement visible.

(8) Há várias qualidades que até ainda nós não se
there.is several species that even already we not SE
conhecemos. (CORDIAL-SIN. ALV)
know-1PL
“There are so many species among fish that even we (fishermen) do not know all of them yet.”

(9) a. Não sabem o.que a gente se passámos ai. (CORDIAL-SIN. CLC)
not know-3PL what pron-1PL SE passed-1PL there
“You don’t know all we’ve been through.”
b. A tesoura que a gente se tosquiam as ovelhas!
the scissors that pron-1PL SE shear-3PL the sheep!
A gente pegavam-lhe pela cabeça... (CORDIAL-SIN. MIG)
pron.1PL would.hold-3PL.them.DAT by.the head
“This is the scissors that we would shear the sheep with! We would hold their head…”

Moreover, a null pronoun may be the doubler of se and control subject-verb agreement. ⁸ In the sentences in (10), a 1ˢᵗ person plural null subject pronoun is responsible for the 1ˢᵗ person plural morphology on the verb.

(10) a. Nunca se vimos este peixe. (CORDIAL-SIN. CLC)
not SE see-1PL this fish
“We never saw that kind of fish.”

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⁸ European Portuguese is uniformly a null subject language; no dialectal variation is found in this respect.
b. *Com a licença de caça e tudo, não se podemos
   with the licence of hunting and all not SE can-1PL
cazar… (CORDIAL-SIN. EXB)
hunt-INFIN
   “Even having a hunting licence, we are not allowed to hunt…”

These same dialects display non-doubling impersonal *se sentences similar to those found in standard EP, Spanish or Italian. In this case the verb invariably surfaces in third person (singular or plural), like in (11) below.⁹ The fact that in the double subject impersonal *se construction the verbal inflection always has its ϕ-features valued by the doubling strong pronoun or DP (see the ungrammaticality of (12)) shows that *se is unable to enter the kind of Agree relation on which nominative Case assignment is dependent (see Chomsky 2000, 2001). It will be proposed in section 5 that this is because the impersonal clitic *se is person-less in the relevant EP dialects.

(11) Há várias qualidades que ainda não se conhece(m).
   there.is several species that already not SE know-3SG(/3PL)
   “There are many species among fish that are still unknown.”

(12) *Há várias qualidades que até ainda nós não se conhece(m).
   there.is several species that even already we not SE know-3SG(/3PL)
   “There are so many species among fish that even we (fishermen) do not know all of them yet.”

4. **Interpretative effects in the double subject impersonal se construction**

The bipartite subject of the dialectal impersonal *se* construction usually has a generic reading. The impersonal subject denotes an unspecified group of humans, which may include or exclude the speaker. In this respect, it does not differ from the standard impersonal *se* construction of EP, Spanish and Italian (see the references in footnote (2) and Chierchia 1995). But the doubling pronoun/DP acts as a restrictor on the denotative range of *se*, and establishes its inclusive or exclusive reading.

4.1. *Inclusive reading (the doubling pronoun/DP is 1st person plural)*

The inclusive reading, which sentences (13) and (14) illustrate, arises when the doubling pronoun/DP is 1st person plural, be it a null or an overt pronoun, as shown in (13) and (14) respectively. These and the other examples throughout the paper come from the CORDIAL-SIN dialectal corpus (see footnote (1)) and arose in the context of spontaneous conversation.

In (13) we can see how the speaker reformulates the sentence to make clear that he is mentioning what local people, including himself, used to do, not what anyone would do. This is unambiguously conveyed by the double subject impersonal *se* sentence, not by the standard impersonal *se* sentence that the speaker uttered in first place. Note that the 1st person plural agreement morphology on the verb indicates the presence in the relevant sentence of a null pronoun with those same φ-features.

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10 A definite reading is also attested in the corpus but appears to be infrequent. We find but the two examples given below:

(i) *Então, a gente deu-se o jantar e ficou melhor* (CORDIAL-SIN. FLF)
then *pron.1PL gave-3SG SE* the dinner and stayed better
“Then we offered that dinner to our neighbours and things started to go better.”
[“we” = “our family”]

(ii) *Leis! Como a gente se falámos ainda agora* (CORDIAL-SIN. CLC)
laws as *pron-1PL SE* talked-1PL just now
“That’s what laws are made for, as we have just talked about.”
[“we” = “the four of us who are here talking about this and that”]
(13) _Sabe às vezes o que se faz, o que se fazíamos,_

know sometimes what _SE_ does, what _SE_ would do-1PL,

antigamente? (CORDIAL-SIN. OUT)
in-older-times

“Do you know what one would do, what we would do, in older
times?”

In (14) the contrast between the fishermen of Câmara de Lobos (Madeira island) and the inhabitants of Lisboa with respect to their eating habits can be set with no need for a locative argument in the first member of the coordinate structure because the presence of the 1st person plural pronoun _a gente_ is enough to restrict the range of the group of humans denoted by _se_, and thus establish its inclusive reading.\(^{11}\)

(14) _A gente não se come, mas os de Lisboa diz que comem daquele_ 

pron.1PL not _SE_ eats but the-ones of Lisbon says that eat.3PL of-that 

peixe. (CORDIAL-SIN. CLC)

fish

“Here we don’t eat that fish but we heard that in Lisbon people eat it.”

4.2. **Exclusive reading (the doubling pronoun/DP is 3rd person plural)**

When an exclusive reading of _se_ is intended, this is obtained by placing a 3rd person plural pronoun (overt or null) as the doubler/restrictor of _se_,\(^{12}\) as

\(^{11}\) The pronoun _a gente_ is semantically 1st person plural even when it does not induce 1st person plural agreement morphology on the verb.

\(^{12}\) The doubler may also be a full DP, like in (i) below, with the same effect of blocking the inclusive reading. Here the speaker is describing the traditional cheese making process, but he is not himself a cheese maker.

(i) _A minha mãe e os outros todos tiravam-se aquele punhadozinho de coaldhada e depois_ 

the my mother and the others all would.take-3PL _SE_ that handful of curd and then 

iam espremendo aquilo... (CORDIAL-SIN. MTM)

went-3PL pressing that
illustrated by (15). Although the speaker did not himself work with the farm tool whose name he is being asked, he knows exactly what people used it for in former times. The sentence conveys a generic reading that excludes the speaker. Sentences like (15) confirm that both members of the bipartite subject contribute to interpretation since the generic reading would not be available if the pronoun eles ‘they’ expressed alone the sentential subject.

(15) Não sei lá a certeza também do nome, também não digo.
   “I’m not sure about the name, so I won’t spell it out”.
   Sei é de real certeza que isto era com o.que se eles
   know-1SG is of real certainty that this was with what SE they
   batiam o centeio. (CORDIAL-SIN. FLF)
   would.beat-3PL the rye
   “But I am totally sure that this was the thing that people used when husking the rye.”

In (16), it is the null 3rd person plural pronoun that induces an unambiguous exclusive reading (the 3rd person plural features are visible on the verbal inflection). The sentential subject refers to the people in town who used to catch birds (but would not use birdlime for that purpose); the speaker previously made clear that he does not belong to the group of local bird-catchers.

(16) Cá nunca se usaram isso. (CORDIAL-SIN. LVR)
   here never SE used-3PL that (the birdlime)
   “People would never use that here.”

“My mother and everybody else would take a portion of curd in their hands and would then go on pressing the curd (until it was ready to pack into the mould)”
5. Accounting for the availability of subject doubling in EP dialects

In order to account for the facts described in the previous sections, I will rely on the hypothesis that the doubling pronoun/DP and the subject clitic 
se belong to the same constituent, a complex DP where the doubler is an adjunct modifier of the clitic se (the latter, a minimal/maximal category in the terms of Chomsky 1995).

(17) \[DP \text{ DP [ } se \text{ ]} \]  (cf. Uriagereka 1995, Kayne 2000, among others)

In this way the interpretative effects described in section 4 can be smoothly accommodated and the syntactic features of the construction can be thoroughly derived as well, as will be clarified in a moment.

Although I am here following the ‘complex DP’ analysis devised by Uriagereka (1995) and Kayne (2000) to account for clitic doubling, it should be noted that the double subject impersonal se construction does not reduce to regular clitic doubling. The crucial difference is that in the latter there must be a secondary source for Case assignment (see how the lack of the Case-assigning preposition a ‘to’ makes (18b) ungrammatical), whereas in the former there is no such requirement.

(18) a. Não foi ele que a beijou a ela, foi ela que o beijou a ele
    not was he that her kissed to she, was she that him kissed to he
    b. *Não foi ele que a beijou ela, foi ela que o beijou ele
    not was he that her kissed she, was she that him kissed he
    “It wasn’t him who kissed her, it was her who kissed him.”

Going back to the derivation of subject doubling in dialectal EP, after the complex DP is assembled (see (17)), it is merged in the structure as the external argument of transitive and unergative verbs, or (less often) as the internal argument of unaccusative verbs, and is assigned a theta-role in its
merging position. The two elements of the complex DP later follow separate routes. The clitic head-moves to T and undergoes cliticization according to the general pattern of clitic placement in EP. The adjunct modifier, as part of the remnant DP, either stays in its base-generated position or takes the regular path of EP subjects. In this way, we account for the word order facts. As the complex DP splits, each one of its constitutive parts just behaves as a regular clitic and a regular DP-subject with regard to movement operations.

The clitic *se* has number (plural) but does not have a person feature or Case. Though it has semantic content, it is syntactically expletive-like and that is what makes the double subject construction available. Because *se* is inert to enter the type of agreement relation that underlies Case assignment (cf. Chomsky 2000, 2001), it is the doubling pronoun/DP that induces subject-verb agreement and displays nominative Case. The doubling pronoun/DP has a complete set of $\phi$-features. It therefore values the $\phi$-features of T and has its Case feature valued.

In the Agree based system of Chomsky (2000, 2001), the feature *person* endows a given probe with Case-valuation properties; hence, finite T can value a given Case feature (as nominative), but a participial head, for example, which does not have a person feature, cannot. I tentatively propose that, conversely, a nominal without a person feature may be devoid of Case-licensing requirements. This hypothesis could be implemented by taking a

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13 Double subject sentences with *SE* are found with transitive, unergative and unaccusative verbs as exemplified respectively in (i), (ii) and (iii).

(i) A gente *se*ga-se *sesse* olhos todos e deixa-se este só. (CORDIAL-SIN. PST)
pron.1PL cuts.off-*SE* those eyes all and leaves-*SE* this one only
“When it is time for the pruning), we remove all these sprouts leaving only this one.”

(ii) Mas, enfim, cá *se* vai a gente *andando*. (CORDIAL-SIN. AAL)
but after.all here *SE* goes pron.1PL walking
“But nevertheless we keep going.”

(iii) A gente *chega-se* à noite, eu faço o meu trabalho... (CORDIAL-SIN. PIC)
pron.1PL *arrives*-*SE* at.the night I do the my work
“When we arrive home at night-time, I do my work…”
nominal without *person* to be an incomplete DP or, to be more precise, an NP articulated with just some functional structure (e.g. NumP). Crucially, lack of person would signal lack of the higher functional categories of the DP domain, in particular lack of D°, the locus of referentiality and, hypothetically, the locus of Case (cf. Longobardi 1994, Chomsky 2001, 2004).

As for the contrast between the EP dialects that allow subject doubling and standard EP, it can be simply derived under the assumption that in standard EP the impersonal pronoun *se* is not a deficient pronoun, but a full referential expression with a complete set of \( \phi \)-features and Case (cf. D’Alessandro 2004).

The current proposal thus converges with Holmberg and Nikanne (2006) in the observation that the grammars that possess the right kind of deficient pronoun are expected to allow subject doubling. 14

In the next section independent additional evidence will be offered to support the contention that the pronoun *se* has the feature plural and no person feature in the EP dialects where the double subject impersonal *se* construction is attested.

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14 The subject doubling impersonal *se* construction is a grammatical option in dialectal EP because it satisfies (a), (b)-2, and (c)-2. of (i):

(i) **On the availability of doubling** (Holmberg and Nikanne 2006):

(a) A category *a* doubles a DP *b* iff they share a theta-role.

(b) Doubling is possible iff

1. *a* and *b* are copies (the case of A and A’-movement);
2. *a* is deficient.
3. [*there is an extra source for case assignment/valuation* (cf. Schoorlemmer 2006). *Addition mine*]

(c) Deficient pronouns include

1. pronominal clitics (the case of clitic doubling);
2. personless pronouns.
6. Further evidence supporting the analysis

A cluster of contrasts between EP dialects and standard EP with respect to the behaviour of se can be easily handled under the approach developed in this paper. This section will briefly consider: adjectival agreement with se in predicative contexts, anaphoric binding, and the alternation between null and overt subjects in expletive constructions.

6.1. The pronoun se is plural in dialectal EP: adjectival agreement

Adjectival agreement in predicative contexts shows that in standard EP the impersonal pronoun se has the number feature ‘singular’. Thus the adjective novo ‘young’ in (19) is not allowed to display plural inflection, as the grammaticality contrast between (19a) and (19b) proves.

Standard European Portuguese:

(19) a. Quando se é novo...
   when SE is young-MASC-SG
   “When one is young…”
   b. *Quando se é novos...
   when SE is young-MASC-PL
   “When one is young…”

In sharp contrast with the standard variety, European Portuguese dialects allow plural agreement between se and an adjectival predicate as illustrated by (20a-b).

(20) a. Na idade é que é; uma pessoa quando se é novos,
   in-the age is that is; a person when SE is young.MASC-PL
   poder (CORDIAL-SIN. ALV)
   can.INFIN
“There is a right time for everything; when one is young, one must have the strength to work hard.”

b. Não se andava calçados (CORDIAL-SIN. CDR)

not SE would.go-3SG with.shoes.on.the.feet-ADJ-MASC-PL

“We wouldn’t go around with shoes on our feet (we would go barefooted).”

These data confirm that dialectal se may differ from standard se as for the value of its number feature. This is certainly so in the dialects where the double subject impersonal se construction is attested. Hence, in this construction the doubling pronoun/DP is always plural, like se itself. The conclusion that dialectal se is plural and therefore can only be doubled by a plural pronoun/DP seems to be at odds with the fact that in sentences like (i) below the subject pronoun a gente doubles impersonal se but at the same time shows third person singular agreement with the verb:

(i) a. A gente chama-se rãs a isto. (CORDIAL-SIN. FLF)

pron.1PL call.3SG-SE rãs to that

“We call these ones rãs (frogs).”

In fact the pronoun a gente displays (obligatorily in standard EP and optionally in dialectal EP) a mismatch between its semantic and syntactic features, being semantically (1st person) plural but syntactically (3rd person) singular (cf. Costa and Pereira 2005). Crucially, it is the semantic features that matter with respect to agreement between se and its doubler. This is confirmed by clitic doubling structures in standard EP (where the same type of big DP is at stake — cf. Uriagereka 1995, Kayne 2000). Although in standard EP a gente always sets subject-verb agreement in 3rd person singular (see (ii) below), it can double 1st person plural pronoun nos ‘us’ (see (iii)). The accusative pronoun nos ‘us’ is the clitic correlate of the strong pronoun nós ‘we’-NOM which only permits 1st person plural agreement with the verb (see (iv)). Thus nos ‘us’ and a gente can be part of the same big DP because they match in semantic features, although they do not match in syntactic features.

(ii) a. A gente chega tarde. (Standard EP)

pron.1PL arrive.3SG late

b. *A gente chegamos tarde.

pron.1PL arrive.1PL late

“We arrive late.”

(iii) Fazer-nos isto à gente?! É incrível.

doenFÍN-us this to pron.1PL is unbelievable

“It’s unbelievable that he/she would do this to us.”

(iv) a. Nós chegamos tarde.

we arrive.1PL late
plural number of *se* has further grammatical consequences as will be discussed in the next section.

6.2. *The pronoun se is person-less in dialectal EP: anaphoric binding*

In a sub-group of the dialects where the double subject impersonal *se* construction is found, anaphoric *se* (reflexive or inherent) can be bound by a 1st person plural pronoun (null or overt), as exemplified in (21). Such sentences are excluded in standard EP (as in many EP dialects).

(21)  

a. *No mar ainda às vezes se orientamos pela*  
in-the sea still sometimes *SE* orientate.1PL by-the  
vaga. (CORDIAL-SIN. MLD)  
wave  
“In the sea we are able to orientate ourselves by watching the waves.”

b. *A gente casámos-se novos.* (CORDIAL-SIN. GRC)  
pron.1PL married.1PL-*SE* young.MASC.PL  
“We were young when we married each other”

The availability of sentences like (21) is expected under the analysis put forth in this paper. In the relevant dialects, defective *se* can be anaphorically bound by any plural pronoun/DP because it has the feature plural and no person feature.

The fact that the number feature of dialectal *se* is plural also explains why it cannot take a 1st or 2nd person singular pronoun as antecedent, as the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (22) illustrates.\(^{16}\) (By the same token,

\[^{16}\text{Note that all dialects also have the non deficient 3rd person *se* of standard EP.}\]
se is never doubled by a 1st or 2nd person singular nominative pronoun in the subject doubling impersonal se construction).

(22) *Eu casei-se cedo

I married-SE early
‘I was young when I got myself married.’

Se cannot have a 2nd person plural pronoun as antecedent either, because the relevant dialects, like standard EP, lack a 2nd person plural pronoun as well as 2nd person plural verbal inflection.

There appears to be a problem for this approach though. The question that comes to mind is why the clitic nós (‘us’, ‘ourselves’), specified for number (plural) and person (1st), does not block the insertion of underspecified se. The answer lies in the fact that the relevant dialects virtually replaced nós (‘we’) with the new 1st person plural pronoun a gente (a former DP: ‘the people’) and presumably also replaced nos (‘us’, ‘ourselves’) – see (23).17

(23) Consequences of the evanescence of nós/nos-1Pl. in some EP dialects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 1</th>
<th>STAGE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Nós vimos-te</td>
<td>A gente vimos-te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we saw you</td>
<td>pron.1PL saw you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Eles viram-nos</td>
<td>Eles viram a gente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they saw us</td>
<td>they saw pron.1PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. (Nós) vimo-nos na televisão</td>
<td>(A gente) vimos-se na televisão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we saw ourselves on TV</td>
<td>pron.1PL1 saw SE₁ on TV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 The evidence given by the CORDIAL-SIN dialectal corpus is not as clear-cut as we would want because the speakers of EP dialects also know standard EP to a certain degree and may produce forms of both varieties in spontaneous speech (especially when involved in conversation with standard EP speakers).
The innovation *a gente* replaced the former 1st person plural pronoun *nós/nos* ‘we/us’. But the pronoun *a gente* obeys Principle B of Binding Theory (see (24)) and is therefore unable to act as a substitute for the 1st person plural anaphora (i.e. *nos* ‘ourselves’). The person-less *se* thus became the universal plural anaphora in the relevant dialects (see (23c)).

(24) a. *[Eu e o Pedro], vimos [a gente], na televisão
   [I and the Pedro], saw [pron.1PL], in-the television
   ‘I and Pedro saw ourselves on TV.’

b. *[Eu e o Pedro], dissemos que [a gente], adorámos a festa
   [I and the Pedro], said that [pron.1PL], loved the party
   ‘I and Pedro said that we loved the party.’

c. *[A gente], sabemos que a Maria criticou [a gente],
   [pron.1PL], know that the Maria criticized [pron.1PL],
   ‘We know that Maria criticized us.’

For anaphoric *se* to be bound by a 1st person plural pronoun (overt or null) two conditions must be fulfilled: (i) *se* must be plural and person-less; (ii) the 1st person plural anaphora *nos* ‘ourselves’ must not be available. Otherwise, the more specified form (i.e. *nos*-1PL) would have preference over the underspecified one (i.e. *se*-PL). We thus expect that some dialects

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18 We could hypothesize that sentences (21a-b) would instantiate the impersonal subject doubling construction but either the impersonal or the reflexive clitic *se* would have been deleted because the sequence *se se* is not allowed in European Portuguese (similarly to most Romance varieties), as illustrated by (i) below – cf. Wanner (1977), Bonet (1995), among others.

(i) *Orienta-se-se bem.
   orientates-SE(impersonal)-SE(reflexive) well
   ‘One knows how to take care of one’s life.’

This hypothesis faces two problems. First, in the dialects that do not have the impersonal subject doubling construction the option of deleting one of the clitics *se* is not available. Second, sentences like (21a-b) are not found in all the dialects that have the impersonal subject doubling construction but only in a sub-group of those dialects. This is expected under the view that the dialects that have a person-less plural *se* but did not lose the 1st person plural pronoun *nós*-NOM/nos-ACC will not display sentences like (21a-b).
allow the double subject impersonal *se* construction but do not allow
binding of *se* by a 1st person plural pronoun. Such dialects fulfil condition
(i), they have a plural person-less *se*, but not condition (ii), they have not
lost *nos* ‘ourselves’. The data offered by the CORDIAL-SIN dialectal corpus
confirm this prediction.\textsuperscript{19}

6.3. Pure expletive *se* with impersonal predicates

The syntactic deficiency of dialectal *se* usually does not extend to its
semantic content. Thus $\phi$-incomplete impersonal *se* still denotes a group of
*humans*. Some dialects, however, reveal that the weakening of *se* that
changed it into a person-less pronoun can go a step further depriving *se*
from semantic content. At that point the semantic [+ hum] feature of *se* is
lost and the clitic starts to appear as the expletive subject of impersonal
predicates, as the examples in (25) illustrate. Sentences (25a) and (25c) are
particularly revealing as they show that the overt expletive *se* can freely
alternate with a null expletive.

(25)  a. Às vezes acontece; já *se* aconteceu. (CORDIAL-SIN. PIC)

sometimes happens; already *SE* happened

“Sometimes it happens; it has already happened.”

b. Nunca *se* me aconteceu isso. (CORDIAL-SIN. CRV)

never *SE* me.DAT happened.3SG that

“It never happened to me a thing like that.”

c. Chega a pontos custa-*se* caro. *Custa caro*

arrives to a-point costs-*SE* expensive. Costs expensive

*uma parelha a arrancar uma charrua*. (CORDIAL-SIN. CPT)

a pair-of-animals to pull a plough

\textsuperscript{19} The double subject *se* construction can be found in some regions of the North of Portugal
but binding of anaphoric *se* by a 1st person plural pronoun is not found anywhere in the
North. Moreover, only a sub-region of the South of Portugal has *se* as the universal plural
anaphora while the double subject *se* construction is pervasive in southern dialects. Cf.
footnote 3.
“At a certain point it is really hard for the animals to go on pulling the plough.”

d. *Vou também ao mar apanhar uns peixes (…)*,
go.1SG also to-the sea catch some fish
*quando se calha*. (CORDIAL-SIN. PIC)
when SE happens’
“I also go fish occasionally.”

The appearance of the pure expletive *se* is again restricted to the dialects where the double subject impersonal *se* construction is found. It thus constitutes one more indicator that in the relevant EP dialects the pronoun *se* gradually lost its referential content.

Finally, it is worth noting that expletive *se* does not occur with weather-predicates. This is exactly what is expected if the subject of weather-predicates is a *quasi-argument* with a complete set of \( \phi \)-features, Case, and a theta-role (see Chomsky 1981: 325, 1995: 288, Vikner 1995).

7. **Consequences of the proposed analysis**

This paper focus on the subject doubling impersonal *se* construction which is found in certain EP dialects but disallowed in standard EP. The main proposal in the paper is that a nominal that lacks a person feature may also be devoid of Case. This is how the clitic *se* of the relevant EP dialects is like; it has number (plural), but no person or Case. Its deficient nature (in the spirit of Holmberg and Nikanne 2006) is what makes subject doubling a grammatical option in dialectal EP. In a few dialects, the expletive-like *se* drifted in the direction of a pure expletive.

If the analysis put forth in the paper is on the right track, the subject doubling *se* construction of European Portuguese dialects brings new empirical evidence that supports the contentions (i) to (iii) below.
(i) “If all other conditions are right, a given argument can be linked to, and coherently composed with, more than one expression”. (Chung and Ladusaw 2004: 118, on the extra object in Chamorro).  

(ii) The impersonal se/si of standard EP, Spanish and Italian is not deficient with respect to φ-features and Case (cf. Cinque 1988), but a full referential expression (D’Alessandro 2004). Therefore, subject doubling with impersonal se/si is not an option in standard EP, Spanish and Italian.  

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20 “Multiple linking, as we have just characterized it, is obviously not the norm. Typically, the syntax and the semantics conspire to make available exactly one expression to be composed with a targeted argument, so that the mapping between arguments and expressions appears to be one to one.” (Chung and Ladusaw 2004: 76)  

21 A reviewer notes that a type of subject doubling is found in Italian (especially Tuscan Italian) in sentences like (i), where noi ‘we’ doubles impersonal si, but agreement between 1st person plural noi and the verb is not allowed:  

(i) a. Noi si mangia sempre alle 12.  
   we.NOM SI eat.3SG always at 12  
   b. *Noi si mangiamo sempre alle 12.  
   we.NOM SI eat.1PL always at 12  
   “We always eat at twelve o’clock.”  

Burzio (1986:81, footnote 47) briefly comments the construction illustrated by (ia): “SI appears in non impersonal uses only dialectally (Tuscan dialects, mostly). In such cases SI has the force of a first person plural pronominal, which sometimes appears overtly in addition to SI, as in (Noi) si vorrebe vedere i nostri amici ‘(We) si would like to see our friends’ (notice that whereas nostri agrees with noi, the verb still fails to agree: a fact for which we have no account)”.  

If si in Tuscan Italian is a first person plural pronominal as suggested by Burzio, it might be similar to EP a gente in bearing different values for its semantic and syntactic features, respectively 1st person plural and 3rd person singular (cf. footnote 15). It is very revealing in this respect that: “In certain Tuscan dialects most typically Fiorentino, si has virtually replaced the ordinary 1st pers. pl. ending of the verb (*andiamo Æ si va)” (cf. Cinque 1988:55, footnote 34 and references therein). Again the parallelism with “a gente+3SG verbal form” competing with “nós+1PL verbal form” in (European and Brazilian) Portuguese is striking.  

The Tuscan subject doubling construction exemplified in (ia) appears to differ from the subject doubling construction discussed in this paper in two respects: (i) si in Tuscan Italian does not behave like a deficient (person-less & Case-less) pronoun; (ii) as far as I know, in Tuscan Italian the doubling pronoun noi necessarily precedes the doubled si. On these grounds, I tentatively take (ia) and similar sentences to be instantiations of the Hanging Topic Left Dislocation construction, with the hanging topic noi escaping the Case Filter (because it is base-generated in an A-bar position) and eventually receiving Default Case (which in Italian is Nominative). Cf. Schütze (2001) and Legate (2008) on Default Case.
(iii) Overt pure expletives are not necessarily blocked when in competition with null pure expletives in a particular grammar (cf. Chomsky’s 1981 *Avoid Pronoun Principle*).

**References**


