Towards a comprehensive meaning for the non-actantial reflexive dative in Spanish*

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ABSTRACT. Within the group of the non-actantial reflexive datives, we first analyse two well-known classes, namely the possessive dative and the benefactive dative. We show that their classification is not as straightforward as could be expected. The remaining group of non-actantial reflexive datives - the most problematic one - expresses neither a possessive, nor a benefactive relationship. This group includes reflexive constructions such as comerase algo, conocerse a alguien, encontrarse a alguien, temerase algo. The purpose of this paper is to set up a hypothesis for the appearance of se in the latter group. We propose that the non-actantial dative se stands for the increased involvement of the subject into the overall process by means of doubling the role the subject plays in the process. This double role obeys objective and/or subjective criteria. In the former case, the reflexive marker is imposed by the syntactic and semantic requirements of the construction itself; in the latter case, the presence of se is due to the conceptual representation of the process the speaker is giving himself. It is further shown that this hypothesis also holds for non-actantial possessive and benefactive reflexive datives, as well as for se appearing with monoactantial verbs.

Key words: dative, reflexivity, non-actantiality

1.  INTRODUCTION

At first sight, the Spanish word se seems to have many functions and can be inserted into different syntactic constructions. In general, traditional Spanish grammars distinguish between the following uses of se: the reflexive construction (Juan se lava), the reciprocal construction (Elena y Jaime se escriben), the pasiva refleja construction (Las cerezas se venden en el mercado), the impersonal construction (En España se vive bien), occasionally,
the *media* construction (*Pedro se ha hundido*), and, if they are complete enough, generally conclude with some 'special unclassifiable cases'. Within the latter category, the following two 'subclasses' are often mentioned:

1. constructions with transitive verbs selecting a direct object and allowing *se*, as long as the reflexive marker does not correspond to an actantial function:

   (1) **Se ha bebido** la botella entera.

2. *se* as a 'companion' of monoactantial verbs:

   (2) Mi papá **se ha muerto** hace dos años.

Apparently, the only reason to put these two subclasses together is their problematic descriptive character, not only from a syntactic, but also from a semantic viewpoint. In a separate paper (De Cuyper and Melis 2002), we discuss some possible reasons for the appearance of *se* in the second type of construction. In an attempt to classify this type of reflexive construction in a broader semantic scheme, we put forward the hypothesis of "the increased presence of the subject in the process".

In the present paper, we tackle the problem of the appearance of the so-called non-actantial dative *se* in Spanish (cf. (1)). More specifically, we investigate what this *se*, that is not controlled by the verb, adds to the construction from a semantic point of view. In conclusion, we will highlight the semantic link relating both the non-actantial reflexive dative *se* and *se* accompanying monoactantial verbs.

2. **THE NON-ACTANTIAL DATIVE AND ITS CLASSES IN TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR: A PROBLEMATIC DELIMITATION AND SIGNIFICATION**

2.1. Introduction

In traditional grammar, non-actantial reflexive datives are frequently considered as those datives that are not saturating the position of an indirect complement. As such, they

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1 For a summary of treatment of *se* in Spanish grammar, see De Cuyper (1998: 9-21) and Martín Zorraquino (1979: 19-31).
2 If the dative *se* has an actantial function, it can be classified within the interpretative classes of either semantic reflexive (*Luis se dice tonterías*) or reciprocal reflexives (*Luisa y Juan se han escrito muchas cartas*).
3 It concerns verbs with only one actant. We propose *monoactantial* to avoid the terminological problem with the notion of *intransitive*, which, in Spanish, also includes verbs that are constructed with an indirect object. Moreover, *intransitive* sometimes only refers to *monoactantial non-unaccusative*.
4 For further details about the discussion whether this definition of 'actantiality' is the most appropriate one, we refer to García-Miguel 1995.
do not belong to the valency scheme of the verb. Generally, this type of dative is divided into two main subgroups: the so-called *datives of possession* (2.2.) and the *datives of beneficiary* (2.3.). We will discuss the legitimacy of this classification and demonstrate how these two types of datives are closely related to a third one, which, at first sight, can be considered as a *parasite dative* (2.4.). In fact, we will defend that the three groups can be linked with each other, and this not exclusively on the basis of their non-actantial syntactic character. Before discussing our approach to the non-actantial reflexive dative, the three types of datives will first be considered separately.

### 2.2. The dative of possession

In studying the dative of possession, two cases are generally distinguished: first, the dative expressing a relationship of inalienable possession, and, second, the one expressing a relationship of alienable possession. The former is illustrated in (3); the latter in (4).

(3) De vez en cuando se rasca la cabeza tratando de entender lo que ahí lee. (M38)\(^5\)
(4) Don Cándido Vidal, nativo del pueblo, se acomoda el sombrero para evitar que el reflejo del sol canicular interrumpa su lectura. (M37)

However, some caution is called for considering the use of *se* in (4), and even in (3), as the marker of the possessive relationship between the entities that the subject and the object refer to. Indeed, as already pointed out by Martín Zorraquino (1979: 97), reflexive constructions can appear in contexts in which, in extra-linguistic reality, the reference of the direct object clearly does not belong to the reference of the subject. For instance, in

(5) María se puso el abrigo de Isabel. (Martín Zorraquino 1979: 97)

it is obvious that any possessive relationship between *María* and *el abrigo* has to be excluded. However, it cannot be denied that some kind of semantic connection is made between *María* and *el abrigo de Isabel*. The reflexive construction restricts to the only field of the subject the pertinence of what is affected. Thus, it is quite reasonable that, when the reference of the subject acts upon the reference of the direct object, which refers to an inalienable part of that subject (as in (3)), the relationship of possession solely constitutes a specification and a necessary and logic conceptual consequence of the contact between the reference of the direct object and the reference of the subject. If, however, we are considering an object that belongs to the subject (as it’s possible in (4)), the contact between this object and its owner can be a

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\(^5\) The examples that have been taken from De Cuyper (1998, volume II) are followed by M or E and a number, depending on whether they were taken from the corpus of the Mexican or the Spanish language, respectively, and on their order of appearance in these corpora.
reason to deduce a relationship of possession (this time an alienable one), but this deduction can only be made at a second level. Since the possessive relationship already exists before the action, it cannot be considered a direct consequence of the construction with se. What really matters here is the insertion of the direct object\textsuperscript{6} into the domain of the subject, via the reflexive dative. Thus, if a possessive relationship exists, the dative marker only stresses this feature by relating explicitly the two participants (denoted as subject and direct object of the construction, respectively) in this relationship.

Another argument against the problematic interpretation of se as an element that merely establishes a possessive relationship can be found in the following example:

\begin{quote}
(6) Lo cierto es que muchos refugiados se \textit{han encontrado} sus casas y huertos ocupados. (E68)
\end{quote}

From a syntactic point of view, this sentence seems to represent a marked case of a syntactic possessive structure. In comparative studies of Peninsular and Mexican Spanish and, more in general, Latin American Spanish, it has often been assumed that the combination of a reflexive with a possessive adjective has to be considered as a syntactic difference between these two geographical areas. For example, Lipski (1994: 284) argues that this phenomenon is observed in bilingual regions, such as Yucatan and Chiapas. According to this author, the syntactic difference is due to substrate and adstrate indigenous language influence. However, in 1972, Lope Blanch already disagreed with this explanation for the \textit{redundant use of possessives}. Our example (6), taken from Peninsular Spanish, shows that Lipski’s (1994) claim is, at least, somewhat too extreme and seems to substantiate the contention of Lope Blanch (1972: 160-161):

\begin{quote}
Aunque en el español castellano se prefiera emplear solamente un elemento posesivo - el dativo simpatético, seguido de artículo y no de posesivo: “tómate la leche”, “te has cortado el dedo”-, la construcción pleonástica no deja de ser perfectamente hispánica, ... Y esta construcción se encuentra documentada desde los comienzos del idioma (...), como continuación que es de la construcción latina también duplicativa: “\textit{Ipsus sibi faciam ut digitos praerodat suos}” (Plauta)\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

Again, it is clear that se does not express the possessive relationship\textsuperscript{8}, for which the possessive adjective is responsible here.

\textsuperscript{6} The latter being either an inalienable part of the subject and thus possessed by the subject (cf. (3)), or an alienable part of the subject that is possessed (cf. (4)) or not possessed by the subject (cf. (5) or even (4), the latter often forgotten by grammarians and linguists).

\textsuperscript{7} It seems quite reasonable to conclude that the use of loan words is neither a cause nor a mechanism, but rather a type of accelerating agent that exploits tendencies that already exist in the language one is dealing with (cf. Company Company 1995: 333 (following Fischer (1992))).

\textsuperscript{8} This is why we reject Lope Blanche’s use of \textit{construcción pleonástica}. 
The discussion of the example in (6), however, does not completely resolve the basic problem. Indeed, if the appearance of the dative reflexive does not directly establish a possessive relationship here, we must ask whether its presence has any sense. We believe it does: it cannot be omitted without creating any problem. The non-reflexiva variant of (6), presented in (7),

(7) Lo cierto es que muchos refugiados han encontrado sus casas y huertos ocupados. (E68)

can refer to exactly the same situation, but the speaker will not conceptualise that particular situation in the same way. We will return to its meaning in section 3.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that the reflexive marker of example (5) must be considered as actancial, as the verb poner has the following structure: poner(s,y,~z|9). This means that the notion of “possession” cannot be exclusively reserved to the non-actancial dative and, again, shows the low relevance of this subdivision within the class of the non-actancial dative.

2.3. The benefactive dative

The nomenclature benefactive dative has often been used to cover all non-actancial, “non-possessive”, reflexive datives that cause classification problems to grammarians and linguists. As this kind of reflexive dative would often imply the beneficiary of the process denoted by the verb, it has been called “dative of beneficiary” or, sometimes, “dative of interest”. Although the latter does not imply the same meaning as the former, at least it is closely related. In contrast to the so-called dative of possession, the relationship of beneficiary, established by se, is not given a priori, but becomes obvious by the use of the verb:

(8) En vista de la oscuridad reinante, se aventuró un audaz paso burocrático, constituyendo una comisión internacional con inclusión de las organizaciones humanitarias para tratar de hacerse una imagen más clara de la situación. (E6)

Supporting evidence in favour of the benefactive character of the dative comes from the fact that it can be paraphrased by a syntagm, introduced by para. However, this test cannot be applied in all cases:

(9) En Mostoles, Sabadell, ... o Leganés, sus alcaldes se las ingenian[sic] estos días para esquivar al Gobierno y aumentar los sueldos. (E127)

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9 Traditional grammars consider also non-actancial datives expressing possession as examples of ‘indirect reflexives’. This explains why in lexicographic tradition also, the dative in examples as Se ha lavado la cara is considered as a reflexive indirect complement. As mentioned in footnote 2, however, we reserve direct and indirect reflexives for actancial reflexives.
(10) Aquel día no se lo podían creer: «Los asistentes desbordaron todas nuestras previsiones y nos dimos cuenta que la huelga era una realidad», ... (E117)

The reflexive datives presented in these examples have become lexicalised. Although not belonging to the valency scheme of the lexical entrance of the verb, se has become necessary in the formation of fixed expressions as apañárselas, creérse, ingeniárselas.

As in the case of the “possessive dative” (cf. 2.2.), the notion of “dative of beneficiary” also remains too vague. First, there is a terminological problem. Indeed, it is difficult to include examples in which the referent of the dative pronoun adopts more a relationship of losing with the referent of the direct object rather than a relationship of benefiting:

(11) Se quitaron el vestido.

To solve this problem, another type of dative could be introduced, namely, the ‘non-benefactive dative’\(^{10}\). But even then, the following issue remains unresolved: when exactly can there be question of a benefactive relationship between two entities?

Second, in analogy to the possessive dative, the semantic effect of beneficiary is not limited to non-actantial datives. Indeed, why should we not include some actantial datives in the beneficiary dative? Indirect objects, introduced by a, can also include the semantic effect of para: darse ánimos, decirse la verdad, proponerse varias soluciones, llevarse las maletas, escribirse una carta. This semantic effect can also apply to reflexive pronouns as in the following deaccusative constructions\(^{11}\): beneficiarse de algo or aprovecharse de algo. And why should we not talk about the beneficiary accusative in examples such as

(12) Se ha lavado.
(13) Gordos y gordas se meten en el agua... parecen contentos. (E407)

It is clear that the notion of beneficiary is too general and too vague to properly define a particular class. Due to the lack of a well-defined characterisation, we suggest to abandon the terminology of the “dative of beneficiary”, although it can be very useful for pedagogical reasons. To avoid the above-mentioned problems we present an alternative approach in section 3.

2.4. Parasite pronouns?

In 2.2., we discussed the problematic example (6) without giving a clear alternative explanation for the appearance of se. In our opinion, se did not express a possessive relation

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\(^{10}\) See Cifuentes (1996).

\(^{11}\) I.e. reflexive constructions of the following type: S, V O, - S, se, V [Prep O].
and, in addition, it could not be included in the class of datives of beneficiary (at least, if one would accept this class (see 2.3.)). As this kind of dative seems not to affect the semantics of the sentence\(^{12}\), either at the level of verbal meaning or at the level of nominal syntagm, it could be considered as being of no importance. Consequently, it could be designated as a *parasite reflexive pronoun*.

The subclass of parasite pronouns comprises verbs that do not select (i) a direct and an indirect object simultaneously, (ii) a non-actantial non-reflexive pronoun (e.g. *le*) or (iii) an adjunct introduced by *para*. With respect to the first and the second aspect, it can differ from the dative of possession; with respect to the first, the second and the third characteristics, it can differ from the dative of beneficiary\(^{13}\). That’s why, in contrast to the first two groups, a parasite dative can never be fitted into the valency scheme of the verb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>dative of possession</th>
<th>dative of beneficiary</th>
<th>“parasite dative”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actantial</td>
<td>+ (e.g. ex. 5)</td>
<td>+ (e.g. ex. <em>llevarse las maletas</em>)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-actantial</td>
<td>+ (e.g. ex. 3)</td>
<td>+ (e.g. ex. 8)</td>
<td>+ (e.g. ex. 15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spite of the fact that “parasite datives” have become marginal in French (Melis 1990b: 104-105), in Spanish, they remain very productive both in written and spoken language.

\(14\) “... Y a los que abusaron de mí, les di lo que se merecian ...” (E101)

\(15\) Por la dureza del régimen que todavía está vigente, me temo que una solución reformista por la simple vía de una alternancia germinal, sería todo insuficiente, cuando no autolimitativa. (M172)

\(16\) ¡Tú, tranquila! Te lo piensas y me lo dices para la semana que viene.

\(^{12}\) Traditional grammars that cite these cases generally argue that the reflexive pronoun can be suppressed without any change of meaning. For instance, this is the case in Seco (1991: 117), who states that the reflexive construction in Pablo (se) bebió una botella

“se emplea [...] sin que la presencia del pronombre átono cambie el significado de la oración.” “El pronombre *se* [...] es un complemento indirecto *innesario* (italics ours), solamente *hace más expresiva* la expresión.”. Butt and Benjamin (1989: 143) are among the few to suggest that the choice between the two constructions is, at least, not always as innocent as it seems:

Conozco a Miguel (→ I know Miguel)

Me conozco a Miguel (→ I know Miguel (and his little tricks)).

\(^{13}\) Note that lexicalized cases of the dative of beneficiary also do not accept a relationship with *para* in the actual language, but one could imagine the existence of such a relationship. We admit that some cases can possibly be classified either in the class of the dative of beneficiary or in the class of the parasite dative. This only confirms our conviction that the classes of “dative of beneficiary” and “parasite dative” cannot be strictly delimited the one with respect to the other. Interactions also exist with the “dative of possession” (e.g. ex. (6) and even (3) or (4), which can present other nuances.)

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Thus, parasite datives still have to be considered in treating non-actantial datives.

Sometimes, the explanation for reflexive/non-reflexive variation has been sought in diatopic differences (Lipski 1994). It has often been argued that the appearance of the ‘superfluous’ se is primarily a Latin-American feature and originates from substrate and adstrate influences. Some arguments can be advanced against this view. In this context, we have already discussed the case of (6), which is a perfectly acceptable sentence to Spanish speakers. Furthermore, we also refer to Lope Blanch (1972: 160-161) and to the conclusion of Company Company (1995) as given in footnote 7.

Alternatively, some linguists propose that the occurrence of se has a real linguistic significance. The use of se originates from aspectual reasons: it would transform the process into a telic or perfective process. The argument that involves telicity seems to function only with some types of verbs and some kind of objects. Indeed, the implied constructions must express “consuming, absorbing, learning or perceiving a specific item or quantity of things, reading through a specific item of quantity of pages, or travelling a known distance” (Moreira Rodríguez and Butt 1996: 47):

(17a) Juan se leyó el libro anoche. (Nishida 1994: 432)
(17b) Juan leyó el libro anoche.

According to some authors (e.g. Butt and Benjamin 1988, Nishida 1994), translation is very helpful to prove this aspectual difference between the non-reflexive and the reflexive use. In the following examples, (18a) would correspond to to drink and (18b) to to drink up.

(18a) Bebió el vino.
(18b) Se bebió el vino.

In (18b), se reflects the fact that no wine was left (it all has been drunk up), whereas the non-reflexive construction in (18a) does not imply that this was necessarily the case.

14 A discussion on the terminological nature is beyond the scope of this article.
15 Nishida (1994) stresses that the direct object must be quantitatively delimited. Her major contribution consists in treating also reflexive static verbs such as conocerse la ciudad de NY. For Nishida (1994), delimited situations involve dynamic telic constructions as well as non-dynamic constructions. Nevertheless, her analysis would predict sentence (19) to be possible with the reflexive marker.
16 However, if we add
(18c) Bebió del vino.
and if we have to assume that (18b) involves the finishing of the wine and (18a) does not, the relation between (18a) and (18c) is unclear. Rigau i Oliver (1994) proposes that se in (18b) absorbs the partitive case. If (18a) can mean that some wine has been left, we feel that this conclusion cannot be drawn automatically. Although the issue is beyond the scope of this paper, we suppose that more criteria have to be taken into consideration to differentiate between (18a) and (18c).
But why, in case of the implied verbs (and direct objects) in examples (expressing telicity!) such as (19) and (20)

(19) *Me vi la costa y me dirigí a ella. (Fernández Lagunilla and de Miguel 1998)
(20) Me he visto toda la película. (Fernández Lagunilla and de Miguel 1998)

does addition of the reflexive marker pose a problem? As far as we know, ver corresponds to the above-mentioned criterion of Moreira and Butt (1996), as do the direct objects. If telicity seems to play a role in the appearance of se, it is probably not the main factor, but only a consequence (one of many) of a more subjacent factor.

Moreover, there are more reflexive non-actential datives appearing with verbs that do not require the type of expression cited by Moreira Rodríguez and Butt (1996). The fact that the reflexive marker would transform an atelic event into a telic one clearly cannot be applied in all cases. The non-reflexive variant (21a) of the following reflexive telic construction (21b)

(21a) He encontrado a la mujer (en cinco minutos).
(21b) Me he encontrado a la mujer (en cinco minutos).

is also telic. Consequently, it cannot be concluded that the role of se is to simply transform an atelic into a telic event. This explanation has, at least, no general value.

In Rigau i Oliver (1994: 37), the aspectual transformational role of se (which, as mentioned above, is too restricted) is somewhat mitigated: the reflexive construction still must express a telic event, but irrespective of what the aspectual character of the transitive construction might be. Barra Jover (1996) also takes in account this empirical fact and claims that this type of se is an aspectual marker that is able to make a verb perfective if it isn’t already intrinsically. In addition, it serves to stress this perfective aspect if the verb is already intrinsically marked for it.

Thus, we still do not have a satisfactory criterion to justify the appearance of the reflexive marker in an atelic construction such as (22b):

(22a) Temo que no aprobaré.
(22b) Me temo que no aprobaré\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{17} An anonymous reviewer points out to us that the reflexive construction followed by an infinitival clause is unacceptable:
*?Me temo estar harto/?Me temo no aprobar.
The reflexive construction of temer would exclusively mean ‘creer que [algo dañino o negativo] va a suceder o ha sucedido’, ‘recelar’ (DEA 1999). The agrammatical examples of temer suggest that this meaning is never provided when temer is followed by an infinitival construction.
Fernández Lagunilla and de Miguel (1998) adopt the view that we do not have to understand *se* as a marker of telicity, but rather as an aspectual operator which requires the following internal structure in the decomposition of the event expressed by the verb it combines with: [achievement + state]. However, despite their more elaborated interpretation of aspectual *se*, we still do not have a solution to justify the appearance of *se* in for instance (22b). In our opinion, *temer* does not correspond to the imposed internal aspectual structure\(^\text{18}\), which does not prevent it from being found in a reflexive construction.

The discussion, given above, highlights that still some gaps remain in the aspectual analyses for the reflexive dative that does not have a possessive nor a benefactive meaning. Furthermore, it should also be noted that this reflexive marker, though associated with the kind of verbs described by Moreira Rodríguez and Butt (1996), has not always been considered as an indication of telicity. An excellent illustration of how linguists differ in their arguments to explain the appearance of the parasite *se* is given below. Cartagena and Gauger (1989: 239) mention *aspectual factors* in an example such as

(23) Juan *se* leyó el libro en dos horas

but advance *diastirical reasons* for the appearance of *se* in

(24) Javier *se* comió una paella.
(25) Pedro *se* fumó un paquete entero.

In contrast, Oesterreicher (1992: 245) considers (24) as an example that fulfills *diastirical criteria*, but he cites example (25) as an illustration of *aspectual se*. Keniston (1967: 149), on the other hand, explains the appearance of *se* in

(26) Un membrillo que yo voy partiendo poco a poco *y* **comiéndomelo** (bold characters ours).

as a *sign of interest*, and Carratalá (1980: 156) puts forward an *emphatic nuance* for

(27) **nos comemos**

Most probably, one single construction can be explained in different ways. Whatever the reason is, it is clear that this type of reflexive construction poses many unresolved problems to linguists. We propose that the various explanations are jointly based on a common, more inherently underlying factor. In the next section, we will attempt to justify the appearance of the non-actantial dative *se*.

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\(^{18}\) As far as we know, *temer* does not imply any achievement.
3. THE NON-ACTANTIAL REFLEXIVE DATIVE

3.1. Se de matización

Recently, Moreira Rodríguez and Butt (1996) have investigated a whole range of the apparently superfluous (and therefore most problematic) appearances of non-actantial se and found 10 main differences between the reflexive and the non-reflexive construction\(^\text{19}\). The common term for all the uses of se they distinguish is se de matización, which could be translated as a se 'adding some shade of meaning'. The nuance of signification given by this kind of reflexive marker can be so strong that in some cases it will be impossible to suppress the reflexive marker, even if we do not only consider the syntactic level. This confirms our view that the denomination of parasite dative for the examples presented in 2.4. is not the most appropriate one. Particularly, in Spanish, more or less important changes in meaning can result from the use of this dative se. This will be illustrated by re-considering some of the examples given in section 2.4. (ex. 14-16), following the findings of Moreira Rodríguez and Butt (1996).

When merecer (cf. 14) has an animate subject, the reflexive form is quite frequent, unless it is followed by an infinitive or a verb phrase. The reflexive construction seems to belong to a somewhat more familiar register and implies the agreement of the speaker (Moreira Rodríguez and Butt 1996: 227-229). This indeed seems to be the case here. When temer (cf. 15) refers more to a suspicion or a belief rather than to a fear, the reflexive form is favoured (Moreira Rodríguez and Butt 1996: 321-322). Pensar (cf. 16) is used when it means 'to think', while 'to think something through', 'to think carefully about it in advance' should be translated by pensarse. When the reflexive construction appears, it often is accompanied

\(^{19}\) These differences are:

1. The speaker wishes to communicate in a lower register (e.g. familiar, colloquial, popular)
2. The speaker wishes to emphasise an event as unplanned (e.g. accidental, surprising, spontaneous)
3. The speaker wishes to emphasise that an action is voluntary
4. The fact that an intransitive verb phrase includes a pronoun of personal involvement, e.g. se me ha caído, se te escapó
5. The speaker wishes to make clear that a verb is used in a figurative and not a literal sense
6. The speaker wishes to eliminate any ambiguity that might be created by a no-pronominal form
7. In the case of verbs involving motion, the speaker wishes to draw the hearer's attention to the point of or reason for the departure
8. Factors of dialect or regional variation
9. Factors of education
10. The speaker wishes to emphasise the idea that the subject has consumed, learned or seen a specific quantity of items or has travelled a specific distance

(Moreira Rodríguez and Butt 1996: 40-41)
by lo (Moreira Rodríguez and Butt 1996: 272-273). This description for the reflexive use of pensar is fully applicable to our example.

We can now return to example (6). According to Moreira Rodríguez and Butt (1996: 159-160), the reflexive form presents the event of finding as unplanned (see nr. 2 in footnote 19). The following example is another clear illustration of the unexpectedness of the event\(^{20}\).

(28) Tras recibir la llamada de su madre, la hija de la anciana llegó al domicilio de ésta alrededor de las 18.00 horas, según fuentes policiales, y se encontró a la mujer, ya muerta, sobre un gran charco de sangre y con señales de haber recibido numerosas puñaladas. (El Mundo, 24 de diciembre de 1998)

We will see that the denomination of se de matización can also be applied to the first two problematic kinds of non-actantial datives.

Although Moreira Rodríguez and Butt (1996) distinguish 10 reasons for using se de matización and discuss 87 verbs separately, unfortunately they do not suggest a more general value for this se. However, they hypothesize that some relations between these factors should exist. This again suggests that there must be a common basis that covers these 'ten' parameters.

In the next paragraph, we will try to put forward our hypothesis for the meaning of se de matización.

### 3.2. A content for se de matización

From a configurational point of view, the insertion of se into the transitive scheme \([S \ V \ O]\) implies its interpretation as a dative. This can be ascribed to its configurational relationship with the pronominal actantial indirect object and to the categorical properties of se. From a syntactic viewpoint, the reflexive marker is always linked to the subject\(^{21}\).

Semantically, se is not autonomous, i.e. it does not have a meaning on its own. It depends completely on the conceptual content of the subject. Thus, as se receives its interpretation from the subject, it will share its semantic properties with those of the subject. The relationship between the subject and the reflexive marker is neither possessive, nor benefactive a

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\(^{20}\) Occasionally, the subtle differences in meaning between the reflexive and the non-reflexive variant are found in some dictionaries. This is e.g. the case for encontrar(se) in Seco, Andrés and Ramos (1999):

1. Llegar a ver o localizar [una persona o cosa (cd)], o llegar a juntarse [con ella (cd)], después de haberlo procurado
2. Ver [alguien a una persona o cosa] o llegar a juntarse [con ella (cd)] sin haberlo procurado. A veces con cd reflexivo con sentido recíproco. A veces con un complemento de interés.

\(^{21}\) The third person reflexive marker shares features of person with the subject; its features of number and gender can be verified only after relating it to the subject.
priori. It simply originates from the increased presence of the subject into the overall process, which gives rise to the basic meaning we propose for the non-actancial reflexive dative: the *doubling of the role the subject plays in the process*. This double role can be represented either objectively or subjectively. In the first case, the reflexive marker is necessary from the point of view of syntax and semantics of the construction itself; in the latter case, it is due to the conceptual representation of the process the speaker is giving himself. In the case *se* is required to obtain a grammatical construction, the semantic reference to the subject, indeed, is represented twice from the point of view of syntax: first, upon lexicalising the function of the subject, it is present as the initial element within the process, and second, as a dative, coreferential with the subject, it also remains present throughout the whole process. If, on the other hand, we are dealing with an emphasis from the speaker (often in the form of affection), the subject also will be given a double representation: one for grammatical reasons, i.e. the presence of the subject in the speaker’s representation of reality and one pragmatically, which is made possible by the reflexive marker. Consequently, the double role of the subject is responsible for the stress on its involvement in the process.

An interpretation of possession (2.2.), of beneficiary (2.3.) and of other *matizaciones* (2.4.) are particular cases of this basic underlying meaning. If the subject is doubled and if the reference to the subject and the reference to the object maintain a stable, previously established relationship, a nuance of possession can be added.

(29) Me he lavado la cara.

If a relationship between the references of the subject and of the object is established only at the end of the process, a relation of beneficiary will appear.

(30) ... “no nos íbamos a comprar ni zapatos, ni íbamos a tener cena de Navidad y fin de año” (M385)

If none of these two cases is applicable, we have to do with other nuances. Ten of the possible ones have been presented by Butt and Benjamin (1996). The denomination of *matización* takes into account the fact that *se* adds conceptual shades of meaning, which can be more or less important for the semantics and the syntax of the verb.

The following examples illustrate the objective use of *se*: leer/leerse and beber/beberse. Upon quantifying the subsequent phases of an event, it is possible to arrive to aspactical differences. However, in discriminating between examples (17a) and (17b),

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22 We avoid to use ‘till the end of the process’ because this implies telicity, which, although possibly pertinent in a large majority of cases, poses some problems, as we have commented for example (22b).

23 Observe the importance of diastirical variation.
(17a) Juan se leyó el libro anoche. (Nishida 1994: 432)
(17b) Juan leyó el libro anoche.

it is not telicity which is the directly decisive factor. Leer el libro simply supposes the event of (a more or less) reading, while leerse el libro suggests a more detailed, step by step reading action (throughout the whole process, and thus, also till the end of the book). The use of the reflexive marker is stressing that the subject is actively involved in reading every part of the book. Hence, this subject will be much more intensively implied in the process than the one mentioned in the sentence of the non-reflexive variant. In the normal case, the latter subject, just as the former, will have arrived to the end of the book (and thus, they both imply a telic event), but it does not guaranty that every part will have been read with the same attention. As we have observed in 2.4., the importance of aspect must be relativized. Although aspectual implications may exist, the case of leer/leerse el libro clearly shows that they cannot be considered as primitives in studying non-actantial reflexive datives. They solely represent one of the various ways of expressing the more subjacent principle to the appearance of se, which is the double role the subject plays in the process. The aspectual difference, referring on the one hand to telic and on the other to atelic processes, is, however, a more directly visible sign of the presence of se.

The appearance of a pragmatical se is exemplified in the following sentence:

(31) **Me temo** que no aprobaré.

Neither aspectual, nor possessive, nor benefactive factors seem to play a role here.24

### 3.3. The link with reflexive monoactantial verbs

The link made in section 1 between transitive verbs accompanied by se and monoactantial verbs with reflexive markers (see examples (1) and (2)) was elaborated on the basis of the 'apparently' not belonging of the reflexive marker to the valency structure of the verb (thus on the basis of non actantiality) and, for this reason, its so-called ‘being of no importance’.25 However, we have demonstrated that gathering the non-actantial datives can also be substantiated on a semantic basis. Non-actantial datives, inserted into the transitive valency scheme of the verb, present a wide range of meaning nuances. Interestingly, we observe similar semantic roles for se in the case of reflexive monoactantial verbs. We observe that,

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24 We would like to put forward that the representation of the double role of the subject is not necessarily just an objective nor a subjective matter; we indeed think that both factors can coincide in a sentence as Juan se ha comido todos los pasteles.

25 See note 12.
just as the reflexive marker in the constructions investigated in the present paper, they need to be analysed as secondary effects from the basic meaning of *se de matización* (De Cuyper and Melis, 2002).

One could even consider the reflexive marker appearing with monoactantial verbs as a dative reflexive. Indeed, whereas the notion ‘indirect object’ always refers to an argument of the verb, the notion ‘dative’ does not\(^{26}\). In the case of (32) and (33),

(32) Se me le han llevado, el coche.
(33) A Luisa me le pusieron una inyección (example taken from Delbecque and Lamiroy (1996: 108))

several dative interpretations are not excluded. In any case, at most one dative can be actantial. The non-actantial dative pronouns cannot be put in correspondence with an actantial dative and cannot be related to the dative from a configurational point of view.

Consequently, no empirical reasons are available to exclude a dative interpretation in (34)

(34) Desde que tenía dos años anda en brazos del abandono “porque te digo que mi mamá se murió cuando tenía dos años y mi papá se largó con otra mujer a Tijuana”. (M363)

If the reflexive dative marker has to be inserted into the valency scheme of the verb (either as an accusative or an actantial dative)\(^{27}\), the interpretative properties of the verb are determining for the role of *se*. If this does not apply, only a non-actantial dative interpretation that originates from the doubled role of the subject in the process, is possible. It is our conviction that on the basis of this feature, there is a relation between the two reflexive markers in (1) and (2).

### 3.4. *Se de matización* within the Spanish reflexive system

As we have observed, the reflexive marker restricts the event to the domain of the subject. This is not only valid for *se de matización*, but for the whole range of *ses* in Spanish. Indeed, the emphasis on the subject, or at least the restriction of the application of the process to the domain of the subject, obeys the use of the reflexive marker in general. *Figure 1* offers an overall view of the presence of *se* in Spanish\(^{28}\).

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\(^{26}\) As Delbecque and Lamiroy (1996) note, contrarily to datives, accusatives are always actantial.

\(^{27}\) See the reflexive and reciprocal constructions in Figure 1 below.

\(^{28}\) The subject of *subjective* constructions corresponds to the subject of the related transitive construction. In *objective* constructions, the subject must be related to the object of the corresponding transitive construction. In the latter case, depending on the agentive or causative character of the external intervention, we are dealing with medio-passive or media constructions. If no external intervention is present (as occurring in internally caused processes and for properties), the reflexive construction belongs to the class of the converse constructions (also known as the class of the inchoative or decausative constructions). For further details about these classes and their mutual relations, we refer to Melis (1990a) and De Cuyper (1998) for French and Spanish, respectively.
In all cases a restriction in the application of the event to the domain of the subject is expressed. In sections 2.2., 2.3. and 2.4., we have commented on various derived interpretative possibilities offered by *se de matización* appearing in transitive constructions with a direct object.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the present paper, we have demonstrated that it is not evident to consider the non-actantial dative that is not identifiable with the ‘possessive dative’ or ‘dative of beneficiary’ as a simple ‘parasite’. With respect to the semantics of the whole range of non-actantial reflexive dative pronouns, we have tried, throughout this paper, to deal with poorly explained, but widely accepted views of a so-called “particular interest of the subject”, generally advanced by the few grammarians who have treated these constructions. In our opinion, the non-actantial reflexive *se* doubles the role of the subject in the process. This gives rise to an emphasis

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29 This clearly proves that a reflexive or reciprocal effect is not the only way to imply the domain of the subject.
on the subject’s participation in it. More concrete, but ununified explanations such as beneficiary, aspectual and diachronic divergences, although far from complete enough to cover all uses of se de matización, can also be integrated into this more overall scheme.

Although subjective uses of se de matización clearly exist (see 3.2.), we would like to stress that in discourse, this does not imply that the addition of this kind of se is only a pragmatic matter. Indeed, there is not always a complete liberty of the speaker\textsuperscript{30}. The fact that some verbs and predications accept the double role of the subject in the process while others do not, originates from the interaction of different objective parameters that allow or disallow the importance on the subject’s involvement in the process. Even when both constructions are acceptable (as in 6-7, 17a/b, 18a/b), it is clear that the two forms, the reflexive and the non-reflexive one, do not express the same conceptual representation of the speaker, although they can refer to the same event in extra-linguistic reality. The exact nature of all these objective and subjective parameters (for which we have not presented an exhaustive list here), the objective restrictions on subjective uses of se de matización and the possible involvement of subjective factors in objective uses of se de matización - within the overall view we have offered here - need to be further explored.

REFERENCES


\textsuperscript{30} Consider the following examples of the non-actantial reflexive dative marker with biactantial verbs:

*me he cortado la carne de Pepito ⇒ he cortado la carne de Pepito
*ha bebido el vino entero ⇒ se ha bebido el vino entero


