

**HAITIAN CREOLE SE: A COPULA, A PRONOUN, BOTH OR NEITHER?  
ON THE DOUBLE LIFE OF A FUNCTIONAL HEAD**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Recent research on the element *se* in Haitian Creole predicative constructions seem to have reached opposite conclusions. On the one hand, *se* has been argued to be a functional head in the verbal functional structure of HC. On the other hand, it has been argued to be a nominal resumptive pro-form of the subject of predication. The paper evaluates the arguments for both positions in regards to the unification potential that each analysis provides to account for the various occurrences of the element *se* in the HC grammar, as well as to the eventual relation that *se* may be assumed to entertain with the element *ye* that surfaces in predicative sentences with displaced predicates. It is shown that neither perspective achieves a full unification. Elements of an alternative analysis based on some innovations of the Minimalist framework presenting a potential for a middle ground position are explored. It is suggested that *se* is a functional projection that alternatively licenses a thematic or an expletive subject, depending on whether it does or doesn't allow thematic checking. The proposal offers a new perspective for the dual role of *se* as a licenser of predication (copula *se*) and as the apparent subject of a type of expletive construction (pronominal *se*). With respect to Creole genesis, this perspective offers a window into the complexity of the workings of universal principles, remaining neutral as

to whether or not these universal principles can be considered to be in part transmitted from the substrate or the superstrate or recreated by the Creole learning child.

## 0. Introduction

Recent research on the element *se* in Haitian Creole predicative constructions such as (1) seem to have reached opposite conclusions:

- (1) Jan se yon pwofesè  
Jan se one teacher  
John is a teacher

Lumsden (1990) and Déprez and Vinet (1997) on the one hand, have independently argued that *se* is essentially a functional head in the verbal functional structure (IP and related projections) of Haitian Creole. The common intuition at the basis of their somewhat diverging views is that *se* is some sort of copula that serves as a link for predication in specific cases. DeGraff (1992) and following, on the other hand, has argued, that *se* is primarily a nominal element that serves as a pro-form for the subject of the predication in (1).

This paper will critically reconsider the arguments provided in support of each of these proposals. The goal is to clarify the remaining issues so as to open new avenues for future research that could perhaps resolve this debate. I will begin by reviewing Déprez and Vinet's (1992)(1997) proposal pointing out its major strengths and weaknesses and then I will address DeGraff's (1992) central arguments for the nominal character of *se* in (1). In the course of this discussion new data will be brought into the picture and alternative analyses will be considered in the light of Chomsky's Minimalist program, which appear to have attractive potential for creating a middle ground position.

### 0.1 Basic facts about the distribution of *se* :

Before plunging into more technical arguments, let us take a brief tour of the distribution of the element *se* to survey the empirical foundation of the diverging insights at the basis of the two opposite analysis.

Pre-theoretically, it is well known that cross-linguistically, constructions such as (1) feature some sort of verbal copula in many languages. Most relevantly for the case at hand, the presence of such a copula is in evidence in both the lexifier language of Haitian Creole, French, and presumably in at least one of its central substrate, i.e. Fon Gbe. This is illustrated below in (2) for French and in (3) for Fon Gbe:

- (2) Jean est mon frère  
John is my brother  
(3) Kòkú nyí nòví cè  
Koku is brother my

On the basis of this simple comparison then, the view that the Haitian Creole particle *se* is a copula seems rather natural. It is reinforced by convergent intuitions

expressed in some grammars of Haitian Creole. Thus for instance, Pompilus (1976) describes *se* (and *ye*) as a copula as does Savain (1991) and Faine (1937 p156) among others.

However, apparent problems for the view that *se* is a copula arise when examples of predicative constructions containing others types of predicates, adjectival or prepositional, are taken into consideration. There, the comparison reveals far less parallelism. As is well known, in French as in English, the copula must always be present in predicative sentences with any kind of predicate. Its obligatory presence with adjectival or locative predicates is illustrated in (4):

- (4) L’oiseau est blanc  
 The bird is white  
 L’enfant est au marché  
 The child is at the market

In Fon Gbe on the other hand, while simple adjectival predicates usually lack a copula as in (5), adjectival passives constructions and prepositional predicates as in (6) require the presence of a linking element plausibly analyzed as a copula.

- (5) hÈví Ó wé  
 bird Det white  
 The bird is white or The bird has become white
- (6) a. ÀvÓ Ó gò wiwólÓn  
 Dress Det be-at crumpled  
 The dress is crumpled  
 b. Ví Ó gò àxì mÈ  
 Child Det be-at market in  
 The child is at the market

A comparison with the corresponding Haitian Creole paradigm reveals distributional distinctions with both the French and the Fon Gbe paradigm. As illustrated in (7) and (8) respectively, predicative sentences with adjectival or locative predicates do not require the presence of the element *se*. As described in DeGraff (1992) and following, *se* appears, in fact, to be essentially incompatible with these predicates.

- (7) Jan bèl  
 John goodlooking  
 John is good looking
- (8) Jan nan lekòl la  
 John at school Det  
 John is at school

Furthermore, while it is standard to assume that one of the central role of the copula in many languages is to serve as a support for tense morphemes, the Haitian Creole element *se* has been repeatedly observed to be in complementary distribution with the TMA markers and the negative particle of the language (Lumsden 1990, DeGraff 1992, Déprez & Vinet 1991,1992, 1997 among others) :

- (9) Tu n’étáis pas un bon professeur

Ou (\*se) pa te (\*se) yon bon pwofesè<sup>1</sup>

Clearly then, positing that *se* in (1) is some sort of copula requires minimally an account of its absence in these and other contexts.

Pre-theoretical support for the view that the Haitian Creole element *se* is a pronominal form rather than a copula can also be found in commonly occurring sentences. First, we find sentences such as (10) in which no other potential subject than the *se* itself is apparent.

- (10) a. Se vrè  
      It is true  
      b. Se pou mwen  
      It is for me

Assuming that a sentence must minimally comprise a subject and a predicate to be well formed, then the view that *se* in (10) may be the subject is rather compelling, if as Déprez (1994) has argued, null argumental subjects<sup>2</sup> are not licensed in Haitian Creole. On this view indeed, (10) has a structure comparable to that of (11), which, uncontroversially, contains a pronominal form and a predicate. In view of such data, considering *se* as a pronominal form is thus rather natural.

- (11) li pati  
      3rdS leave  
      S/he left

Here as well, traces of a pronominal analysis can be found in grammars of Haitian Creole. Sylvain (1958) for instance classifies the *se* in sentences such as (10) amongst the deictic pronominal forms, considering it a variant of *sa*, with a phonology inherited from the French expression *c'est*<sup>3</sup>.

Cross-linguistic considerations also provide evidence for the possible presence of a pronominal form in predicative sentences such as (1). As discussed in Déprez and Vinet (1992) for instance, Hebrew nominal predicative sentences feature an obligatory pronominal form between the subject and the predicate. As this form is identical in every respect to a third person pronoun in Hebrew, it provides a rather strong basis for the possible presence of a pronominal form in predicative nominal sentences.

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<sup>1</sup> As first suggested by Damoiseau (1987) and then argued by Déprez & Vinet 1989, 1992, 1997, the occurrence of *se* preceding a TMA maker is possible only when the subject NP is in a dislocated position. See Déprez and Vinet 1992 for detailed arguments and see below for a discussion of this construction.

<sup>2</sup> See DeGraff (1992b), (1993) for the opposite view.

<sup>3</sup> From the point of view of Creole genesis, this intuition should not be understood as a desire to posit the French form as an underlying motivation for the existence of the Creole *se*. As is well known indeed, Sylvain's goal was in fact to assert the African root of HC, and in this sense, her description prefigures rather a substratist position. From the point of view of universalist positions, it is interesting to note that *se* appears to be a very early form in child language acquisition. My 20 months old daughter's very first utterance with the potential of having a sentence like structure was "se chaud". There were no evidence in her speech of the existence of either a separate deictic pronoun or of any other copula form at that time. The 'sentence' was uttered systematically in the presence of any object that emits some kind of smoke or vapor (warm food mostly) and she pointed at the objects whenever.

- (12) Dana hi ha-mora, lo at !  
 Dana she Det-teacher, not you  
 Dana is the teacher, not you

In sum, when surveying the most basic evidence, it seems clear that each of the two diverging analyses of *se*, as some form of copula or as some pro-nominal form has intuitive appeal. Both have, so to speak, largely equivalent a priori plausibility. This could well be taken as an indication that *se* has in fact a dual nature, or more radically, that there are (at least) two distinct elements *se* that happen to be homophonous. The latter approach, however, raises its own set of unresolved questions. Should there be such two homophonous lexical items, how could the native speaker of Haitian Creole distinguish them and use them appropriately in the fitting environments? That is, the assumption that there are two distinct elements *se* in HC appears to simply change the nature of the problem without providing a clearer solution. Faced with this new set of questions, one is left hoping that the two apparently conflicting approaches can be resolved, either through the elimination of one of the two views, i.e. by operating a primary choice as to the nature of *se* and a reduction of its other properties through a coherent analysis or by finding some avenue of reconciliation that could combine the verbal and the nominal character of *se* without implying the existence of two homophonous lexical items<sup>4</sup>.

With this goal in mind, let us review the proposed analyses and see which, if any appears, closer to resolve the dual nature of the element *se* and avoid the potential pitfall of positing the existence of irresolvable homophony.

### 1. Déprez and Vinet 1997 analysis:

#### 1.2 Basic assumptions of the analysis:

Déprez and Vinet (1997) analysis is an attempt to link distinct uses of the element *se*, in predicative constructions such as (1), on the one hand, and in clefting constructions such as (13) on the other hand:

- (13) Se Jan Mari renmen  
 Se John Mary likes  
 It is John Mary likes

In this respect, D&V's analysis is in the same vein as Lumsden's (1990) original proposal but it further attempts to provide an additional unification between *se* and the element *ye* that appears in sentence final position when certain predicates are fronted:

- (14) Se frè mwen, Jan ye  
 Se brother my , John ye

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<sup>4</sup> A comparable debate is entertained in a interesting paper by M.Baptista (199 ) on the nature of the morpheme *e* in Capverdean Creole. She argues against the analysis of *e* as a pronoun and proposes to consider it as a functional projection generated in Agr<sup>o</sup> .

It is my brother that John is

The central proposal of this paper is that the elements *se/ye* head a functional category ASP/PRED in the verbal functional structure of Haitian Creole that surface when no lexical head can move into it. Along with Chomsky (1995), D&V assume the following abstract functional structure for HC sentences and identify *se/ye* with the head of the lowest functional projection, i.e. the one closest to the lexical predicative head.

- (15) [AGRP Jan Agr [NEGP pa [TP te [MOODP(?) [ASPP ap [VP domi ]]]]]]  
 John not Past Asp sleep  
 John was not sleeping

In the (1997) paper, the lowest projection in the verbal functional structure of HC is labeled ASP. Further developments concerning the functional structure of sentences would now rather have us identify it with the PRED projection proposed by Bowers (1993), possibly located below an ASP node<sup>5</sup>. More specifically, D&V (1997) follow Kihm (1990) in assuming that *se* is in fact a bi-morphemic element composed of *s*, on the one hand, and (*y*)*e* on the other. (*y*)*e* is taken to be the copular element in the PRED projection, with *e* its weak clitic form similar to the English contracted copula ‘s, and *ye* its corresponding strong form in sentence final position. *S* is taken to ambiguously occupy either the Specifier position of an assertive projection ΣP, the positive equivalent of the NegP proposed by Laka (1991) or the “subject” position, Spec IP (or AGRP), under its pronominal interpretation and to cliticize to *e* at the phonological level.

## 1.2 Accounting for the distribution of *se* with distinct predicates:

Let us begin by considering how this analysis accounts for the distribution of *se* with various kinds of predicates. Under D& V’s analysis, predicate restrictions on the distribution of *se* are taken to follow from general constraints (the HMC) on the movement of the predicate to the functional projection Pred<sup>6</sup>. Following Lumsden (1990), D&V assume that lexical predicates can move to occupy the head of the Pred projection as in (16):

- (16) [Jan<sub>i</sub> TP [ [PREDP t<sub>i</sub> [Pred<sup>0</sup> bèl<sub>j</sub> [ADJP t<sub>j</sub> ]]]]]

In such cases, predication is direct and *se* does not surface. Within the Minimalist framework, this movement could be seen as enforced by a strong feature in the Pred head.

<sup>5</sup> The question of whether all these projections are actually present even when they are radically empty in all the HC sentences is largely orthogonal to the present discussion. However, in the spirit of the Economy approach proposed in Chomsky (1995) and following, it seems natural to assume that only the projections whose heads and/or specifiers are filled are in fact present in the structure of given sentences.

<sup>6</sup> As D&V’s paper clearly states: “the insertion of *se* is a last resort process to license predication when movement to ASP is excluded under general principles such as the ECP-- thus implying **that the nominal character of the predicate is irrelevant**. What matters is whether or not a lexical element is separated from ASP by another functional projection” p216. Similarly for *ye* : “...only the strong form of the HC aspectual marker (i.e *ye*) can occur when the predicate has been fronted and this is to satisfy the ECP”p 220.

Note incidentally, that the proposed raising of lexical predicates does not entail that any further raising up the verbal structure of Haitian Creole to TP or AGRP must take place. In this respect, HC resembles English, a language in which predicates raise obligatorily to PredP or *v* in Chomsky (1995) but which is still considered a non verb-raising language because it lacks raising to TP, in contrast to French, for instance. D&V make the same assumptions for HC. As indicated by the relative positions of verbs and adverbs and verb and negation (DeGraff 1994), there is no more verb movement to TP in HC than in English. In Minimalist terms, this suggests that PredP is the only projection in the verbal functional structure of HC to contain a strong feature and enforce head raising.

For examples like (1) in which *se* must surface, D&V propose that the relation between the predicate and the functional Pred head cannot be direct because of the blocking effect of an intervening functional head, here D<sup>o</sup>, on the predicate movement. D&V take this blocking effect to be an instance of the HMC, (or Relativized Minimality), head movement being illicit because of the presence of an intervening head. The structure of such examples is as follows.

(17) \* [TP Jan [<sub>PredP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> yon D<sup>o</sup> [<sub>NP</sub> pwofesè] ]]]

In such cases, as head movement cannot take place to check the strong feature of Pred, the element *se* is inserted. More precisely, as seen in D & V 1997 paper, *e* the weak form of *ye* is Merged in Pred and *s* is Merged in the Spec of ΣP (Laka 1991). The two are then assembled in the phonology, by the cliticization of *s* and *e* to form *se*. The final structure of examples like (1) is thus as in (18):

(18) [TP Jan [<sub>ΣP</sub> s [<sub>PredP</sub> e [<sub>DP</sub> yon D<sup>o</sup> [<sub>NP</sub> pwofesè ]]]]]

This structural approach to the distribution of *se* with distinct predicates makes an interesting prediction. In contrast to Lumsden's (1990) who takes the distributional restrictions of *se* to be a consequence of the categorial nature of the predicate, the presence/absence of *se* is here taken to result from structural constraints. The latter approach predicts that in principle, all types of predicates should be able to move to the Pred head position, provided they are not separated from this head by an intervening functional projection. This prediction seems to be verified.

First, as noted in D&V (1992, 1997), bare nominal predicates can occur in predicative sentences without *se* as in (18) (see also DeGraff 1992):

(18) Jan chapantye  
 John carpenter  
 John is a carpenter

This suggests that nominal predicates can move to the head of PredP, and thus, that contra Lumsden (1990), there is no categorial restrictions against the raising of nominal predicates.

Second, interesting alternations with prepositional predicates seem to further corroborate this finding. As D&V (1992, 1997) noted, for certain speakers at least, *se* can co-occur with some prepositional predicates. Examples of this type are given below:

(19) a. li se tankou sè' m  
 3rdS se like sister my  
 She is like my sister

- b. Tout sa se pou ou  
 All this se for you  
 All this is for you

Although D&V's paper pays rather little attention to PP predicates in general, the authors suggested in a footnote 4 that in cases like (19), the preposition has a functional nature so that it intervenes between the lexical predicate and Pred, and blocks potential head movement. As a result, Pred remains empty and *s(e)* gets inserted as above. Movement of the preposition itself is excluded as a consequence of a restriction against movement of functional heads out of their extended projection. The underlying assumption here is that functional prepositions are part of the functional extended projection DP (see Grimshaw 1989), something like a case marker, and thus cannot move to the sentential extended projection. In Minimalist terms, this constraint could be reinterpreted as evidence that functional prepositions (and functional projections in general) lack the appropriate feature to check the strong feature of PredP. The nature of this feature at this point remains elusive, but an interesting possibility would be to associate it with a theta feature. On this view, PredP would resemble Kratzer's (1995) voice head, Chomsky's (1995) *v* head or Collins *Tr* head in being necessary for the assignment of an external theta-role to the subject of predication. This would have as a consequence that only elements endowed with thematic features could participate in predicate raising. This again seems to be verified.

Recall that with other prepositional predicates such as (8) above, *se* is not present. In this case, the logical conclusion is that the preposition itself must be the raising head occupying PredP<sup>7</sup>. This possibility suggests that in this case, the preposition must be endowed with appropriate thematic features. The fact that predication without *se* seems particularly enforced with locative prepositions (DeGraff 1999) is then not surprising, as locative prepositions appear to be the most likely candidates for theta-assigning prepositions. The alternation between prepositional predicates with *se* and prepositional predicates without *se* could then be taken to reflect the ambiguous status of prepositions as functional elements or as full lexical items with theta-assigning properties. It is interesting to note, that rather than partitioning prepositions into distinct classes, this proposal leaves open the possibility that the same preposition could be sometimes theta-assigning and sometimes functional. The examples in (20) seem to provide support for this possibility:

- (20) a. Li **nan** lekol la DeGraff (1992)  
 He in school the  
 He is at the school
- b. Youn nan diferans ant Ayiti ak Sendomeng Vedrine (1999)  
 One in differences between Haiti and Saint Domingue  
**se nan** koulè ekolojik de repiblik yo  
 SE in color ecological two republics the  
 One of the differences between Haiti and St Domingue is in the ecological

<sup>7</sup> See Koopman (1983) for a comparable proposal for a preposition copular element in the Kru languages.

colors of the two republics

c. m pa te di ou vi mwen se nan navigasyon Wyngert-P  
1rstS Neg Past tell you life 1rstS SE in navigation (1982)  
I did not tell you that my life is in navigation

In all the cases above, it is the same preposition *nan* that occurs in a predicative sentence with or without *se*. In example (20a), the preposition clearly has its full locative force. In (20b, c), on the other hand, it has a more abstract meaning, closer to that of a coordinating preposition similar to *among* or *in* in expressions like *in general*. Although further work is needed to establish this possibility, it is interesting to note that independently of the distribution of *se*, the preposition *nan* seems to have clear “functional” usage. *Nan*, for instance, serves to form the HC partitives as shown in (21) below :

(21) Youn nan diferans  
One in differences  
One of the differences

In this respect, this HC preposition is rather similar to the French preposition *de* that sometimes has a full locative meaning as in (22a), while in other cases such as (22b), it is quite clearly a mere functional element:

(22) Je suis de Paris  
I am from Paris  
Le début de l’histoire  
The beginning of the story

That the Haitian preposition *nan* can be a theta-assigning lexical item, on the one hand, and a functional case marker, on the other hand, has been independently argued by Joseph (1993). I am here simply suggesting that this difference may be at the root of the complex alternation of the presence/absence of *se* in predicative sentences with prepositional predicates.

Finally, as the following pair of sentences further indicates, *se* can apparently occur between a pronominal subject and predicates like *malad* (*sick*) most often considered as being adjectival in nature<sup>8</sup>:

(23) a. Nou se malad  
We SE sick  
b. Nou malad  
We sick  
We are sick

Interestingly, however, examples like (23a) are not equivalent to those without *se*. They manifest a intriguing interpretative difference. While (23b) involves the straightforward predication of the property *sick* to the subject, (23a) has an additional identificational

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<sup>8</sup> The example is from Pompilus (1976). The acceptability of such examples, and the relevant interpretation difference is also acknowledged in DeGraff (1992).

interpretation. It asserts that the members of the subject plurality are all members of a (given) set of sick people and that this constitutes their identity, as opposed to some other contextually relevant group. As observed by Pompilus (1976), this subtle interpretative difference translates in French by the presence or the absence of a determiner on top of the adjectival predicate:

- (24) a. Nous sommes des malades  
           We are       some sick  
       b. Nous sommes malades  
           We are       sick

It is rather clear that in French, the adjective *malade* in (24a) has been “nominalized” by the addition of the determiner. As proposed by Déprez (1999a), the same is plausibly valid for the HC example (23a) with the difference that, in this case, the determiner remains phonetically null. If so, the structure of this example is as in (25):

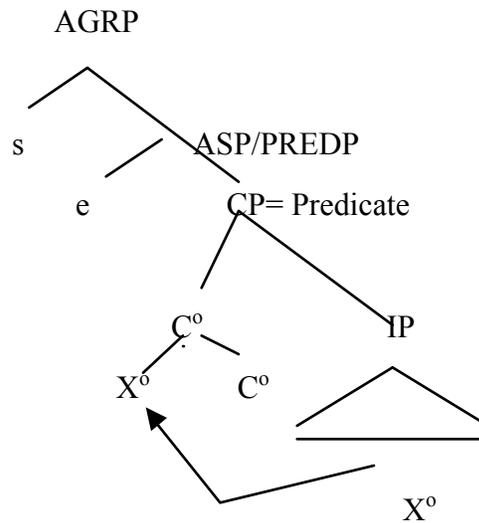
- (25) [TP Nou           [<sub>PredP</sub> se [DP D<sup>0</sup> [ADJP malad ]]]]

(25) then shows that when adjectival predicates are separated from the Pred head by a functional projection, here a null D<sup>0</sup>, *se* must also be present. This suggests clearly that the categorial nature of the predicate is not the relevant factor for the distribution of *se* with distinct predicates. Rather, as proposed by D&V, restrictions follow from structural conditions affecting the potential movement of the predicate and more specifically, from whether or not the predicate is dominated by an overt or covert intervening functional projection.

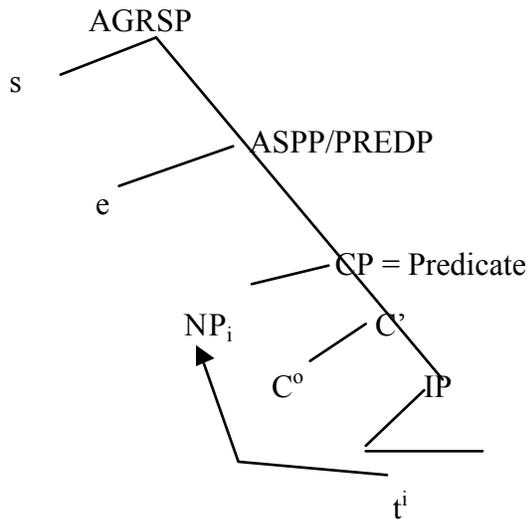
### 1.3 *Se* in cleft constructions:

D&V further extend this view of the distribution of *se* to cleft constructions. In similarity with predicative constructions, they suggest that the emergence of *se* in clefts stems from the presence of a functional projection on top of the cleft “predicate”. Assuming the bi-clausal structure (26) for predicate clefts and (27) for constituent clefts, D&V identify the CP as “the predicate” of these constructions, i.e. a maximal projection with an open position, and suggest a parallel between C<sup>0</sup> and determiners in predicative constructions such as (1).

(26) Predicate Clefts = copy = X<sup>o</sup> in the head of CP



(27) Constituent Clefts : Movement to Spec CP



For both types of cleft constructions, D&V take the null complementizer C<sup>o</sup> to be, in an abstract sense, the counterpart of the overt determiner of DP predicative constructions, i.e. a functional element that blocks movement into the head of the upper Pred. Given this abstraction, the presence of *se* in cleft constructions, with *s* in Spec AgrP and *e* in the head of Pred, essentially parallels its presence in predicative constructions. In all cases, *se* must be present whenever Pred<sup>o</sup> is empty, the relevant predicate being dominated by a

functional projection, be it  $D^0$ , a functional preposition or  $C^0$ , which D&V all unify under the label “DP predicates”.

Once this unifying link between the two main uses of *se* is proposed, two central questions remain to be solved. The first one concerns the link between *se* and *ye*, the second, the distribution of *se/ye* with TMA markers. We briefly consider each in turn, referring the reader to D&V’s original paper for further details.

#### 1.4 Ye and se: allomorphs or distinct morphemes ?

Recall that as noted above, *ye* occurs in HC when the predicate has been fronted. That is, in parallel with the predicative construction (29a), we find the emphatic construction (29b) where the form *ye* arises in place of the expected *se*:

- (29) a. Jan se zanmi mwen  
           John SE friend my  
       b. Se zanmi mwen Jan ye  
           Se friend my John YE

*Se* and *ye* are quite generally in strict complementary distribution. While *se* always occurs sentence initially (in cleft sentence) or sentence medially (in predicative sentences), *ye* is always found in sentence final position<sup>9</sup>. Their complementary distribution and their apparent common role as a link for predication is at the root of the insight identifying these two elements. In parallel to the conventional reasoning in phonology unifying two allophones in complementary distribution as distinct manifestations of a single phoneme, the same reasoning suggests that *se* and *ye* could be allomorphs of the same morpheme. This insight, present in various works on Haitian Creole (Pompilus (1976) among others), is the one D&V chose to follow.

Unifying these two elements, however, is far from straightforward. In addition to their complementary distribution, there are indeed at least two other distributional differences between *se* and *ye* that must be explained away. First, while *se* is essentially in complementary distribution with TMA markers or must precede them (see below), *ye* can co-occur with them and is generally placed after them:

- (30) Se pwofesè mwen li pa te ye  
       Se teacher 1rstS 3rdS Neg Past YE  
       He surely was not my professor

Second, it was claimed by DeGraff (1992) that there is a difference between the types of predicates compatible with *se* and the type of predicates compatible with *ye*. Reserving a discussion of the first difference for the more general consideration of the distribution of *se/ye* with TMA markers, I now turn to the second issue.

#### 1.5 Ye with distinct predicates:

<sup>9</sup> More specifically, *ye* always precedes the site of a deleted predicate. We return to this point below when discussing DeGraff’s approach.

In the logic of D&V's proposal, if predicate restrictions with *se* follow from independent structural considerations, then so should predicates restrictions with *ye*. Let us turn to the data to see whether this view is a reasonable one. Incidentally, the reader should be aware that much of the data considered below are not discussed in D&V's paper. It was a decision of the authors at the time to leave prepositional predicates aside, pending further research (see Déprez 1999b.) and it is additional research on constructions with *ye* that has since then uncovered some revealing uses of this element.

As described by DeGraff (1992), *ye* surfaces with fronted nominal and prepositional predicates but not with adjectival predicates. There are thus two different patterns of fronting constructions. For adjectival predicates, fronting yields predicate doubling constructions as in (31):

- (31)            Se damou Jan    damou  
                   Se in love John in love  
                   John is in love

For nominal and prepositional predicates, fronting yields the constructions with *ye* as in (30). DeGraff (1992) takes the distribution of these two patterns with distinct predicates as a symptom of a difference in the nature of *ye* and *se*. On his view, *ye* is categorially compatible only with **non-verbal predicates** (DG p179) i.e. predicates that are categorially [-V] such as nominal predicates [+N, -V], prepositional predicates [-N, -V] and *wh*- elements, while *se*, in contrast is purely nominal [+N, -V]. The consequence of this classification is that *ye* and *se* are expected to differ as to their respective categorial compatibility with prepositional predicates.

Let us reconsider the reasoning that led to this conclusion. To the absence of *se* with adjectival predicates, corresponds an absence of fronting construction with *ye*, and a doubling pattern. As observed above, locative prepositional predicates also occur without *se*. Their corresponding fronted variant, however, uses the pattern with *ye* and not the doubling pattern. This distinction could of course be taken to indicate that *se* and *ye* differ in categorial nature, i.e. essentially DeGraff's claim, the latter being compatible with PPs and the former incompatible with them. It seems to me, however, that such a conclusion is not necessary. Indeed, the presence of the *ye* pattern with prepositional predicates could just as plausibly stem from independent restrictions on the availability of the doubling pattern for prepositions. Let us suppose that the doubling pattern is excluded for prepositions on independent grounds. Then the *ye* pattern may well be a last resort option for constructions with displaced PP predicates. If so, there would be no categorial restrictions on either *ye* or *se* and their non-parallel emergence would simply be the consequence of independent conditions on alternative structures.

D&V have suggested that the absence of *se* with (locative) PP predicates stems from the raising of the prepositional head into Pred. In this behavior, prepositions do parallel adjectives. From this similarity, however, it does not follow that all the elements that can raise into Pred must also display a corresponding doubling strategy in emphatic constructions. As noted by Lefebvre and Larson (1991), there clearly seem to be independent restrictions on predicate doubling. Doubling indeed is not available for all verbal predicates. Stative predicates such as *konnen*, for instance, cannot double.

- (32) \* Se konnen, Jan konnen Franse  
 Se know , John knows French

If doubling is restricted to predicates associated with a process<sup>10</sup>, then the fact that prepositional predicates cannot double is hardly surprising. Prepositional predication surely is stative rather than process like as indicated, for instance, by the fact that it is infelicitous with the progressive TMA marker *ap*.

- (33) \*Jan ap nan lekòl la kounye a  
 John is being at school now

In sum, if prepositions cannot double, then the only alternative fronting pattern for this type of predicate is the *ye* strategy.

The approach taken here to the *ye* fronting pattern is in tune with D&V's approach to the distribution of *se*. Their idea is that *se* is a last resort element that surfaces when the Pred head cannot be filled through head movement. Similarly, *ye* can be assumed to surface as a last resort option when doubling is impossible, i.e. when copies of a predicate cannot simultaneously occupy a displaced position and fill the head of the Pred projection. This approach to the distribution of *ye* makes again the rather strong prediction that, in principle, there should be no categorial restrictions on the emergence of *ye*. Support for this conclusion is provided by interesting data, which to my knowledge, are brought into this discussion for the first time here.

First, in a thorough study of a large corpus of Haitian adjectives, Damoiseau (1996) notes that 252 adjectives out of a total of 440 (i.e. more than half) show possible alternations in emphatic contexts between a doubling pattern and a *ye* pattern. The following are examples of the latter type, i.e. examples of the *ye* pattern with adjectival predicates:

- (34) Se grangou li ye  
 SE unscrupulous 3<sup>rd</sup> Ye  
 He is unscrupulous  
 Se mabyal li ye  
 SE severe 3<sup>rd</sup> YE  
 He is severe  
 Se bosal li ye  
 SE brutal 3<sup>rd</sup> YE  
 He is a brute

Damoiseau furthermore notes that there is an interesting interpretational difference between the pattern with *ye* and the doubling pattern. In his own term, it is only when adjectives admits of an interpretation that is permanent and identificational, what

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<sup>10</sup> Larson and Lefebvre (1989) propose that the distinction between doubling and non-doubling predicates falls along the stage level/ individual level distinction proposed by Carlson (1987). However, I have seen several doubling examples that apparently contain an individual level predicate such as for instance:

(i) Se entelijan, Jan entelijan

It thus seems to me that the stative/dynamic distinction might be more appropriate. As noted by Damoiseau, only predicates that can double systematically allow the progressive aspect marker *ap*.



seems straightforwardly contradicted by the possible appearance of *ye* in comparative constructions .

In sum, it has been argued here that neither *se* nor *ye* are categorially restricted as to the predicates they allow and that their apparent incompatibility with distinct predicates results from independent conditions, structural conditions on predicate movement for *se* and restrictions on doubling for *ye*. Given these restrictions, both *se* and *ye* emerge as last resort options to fill the head of Pred, either when a predicate cannot move into the head of Pred, or when it cannot double, i.e. occupy simultaneously a displaced position and the head of Pred. Abstractly then, both *se* and *ye* can be said to emerge whenever the head of Pred is not otherwise filled. In this respect, they show a clear parallelism which militates in favor of identifying them as allomorphs of the same morpheme, provided of course that further conditions on their respective distribution can also be explained away. In this regard, two central questions remain to be considered, that of the complementary distribution of *se/ye* and that of their respective distribution with TMA markers. Both are considered below.

### 1.6 *Se, ye* and TMA markers

Concerning the complementary distribution of *se* and *ye*, D&V propose that the presence of the strong form of the Pred head *ye*, in fronting constructions, is due to the ECP. They assume that in similarity with the reduced form of the English copula ‘*s*’, (*s*)*e* cannot precede the site of a displaced predicate, because it is a weak clitic form unable to head govern the empty category left by the movement. It follows that whenever a predicate is displaced, *ye* must surface to head govern its trace, unless of course, doubling can occur. That is, like the non-clitic strong form *is* of the English copula in (37), the strong form *ye* in HC must be used to satisfy the ECP.

(37) \* Brutal, John surely’s [t ]

Brutal, John surely is [t]

(38) \*Se bosal, Jan (s)e [t]

Se bosal, Jan ye [t]

This proposal provides a nice account for the obligatory presence of *ye* with displaced predicates, but it leaves unexplained why *ye*, the strong form, can never surface in sentence medial or sentence initial positions:

(39) a. \*Jan ye yon pwofesè

John YE one professor

John is a professor

b. \*Ye yon pwofesè Jan ye

YE one professor John YE

John is a professor

If D&V are correct in proposing that (*s*)*e/ye* are allomorphs of the same morpheme, the relevant generalization seems to be that wherever *ye* is not needed to satisfy the ECP, then it is simply not allowed. Only the weak form (*s*)*e* can surface, modulo its own set of conditions, i.e. the presence of functional projection blocking movement. This

generalization clearly has the flavor of an Elsewhere condition and/or an Economy condition. Wherever *ye* is not needed, it is excluded<sup>11</sup>. How Economy conditions could play a role on this choice of allomorph needs to be spelled out. A potentially hopeful approach may be found in the theory of Distributed Morphology where lexical items do not have a real existence and are simply the result of the late Spell out of formal features, subject to Economy conditions and/or to potential reduction rules. Developing such an account in details, however, is beyond the scope of the present paper, so I will leave it for future research.

Another source of questions concerns the systematic absence of *s* with *ye*. On D&V's view, it is unclear why *s* should always be generated when the clitic form is used, but never with the strong form *ye*. If D&V are correct in assuming that *s* is some kind of assertive particle generated in the Spec of  $\Sigma P$ , it may well be that there are semantic considerations that regulate its appearance (see for instance Kihm 1990). But since the nature of these semantic considerations remains elusive at this point, it is clear that D&V's analysis leaves this question unresolved.

Pursuing on the distribution of *ye*, let us now consider its co-occurrence with TMA markers. As noted above, *ye* can occur alone, but it must be present when TMA markers or negation are present. More specifically, sentences in which the trace of a displaced predicate is dominated only by a TMA marker are ungrammatical.

- (40) a. \*Se [pwofesè mwen]<sub>i</sub> li te t<sub>i</sub>  
           SE teacher my 3rdS Past  
       b. \*Se [nan lekol]<sub>i</sub> li pa t<sub>i</sub>  
           SE in school 3rdS Neg

To account for the necessary presence of *ye*, D&V suggest that the HC TMA markers lack appropriate governing capacities and are thus not members of the set of potential head governors (See Rizzi 1991). From this, it follows that sentences like (40) are excluded because they violate the ECP since the trace of the displaced predicate fails to be appropriately head governed.

As for the position of *ye* with respect to preceding TMA markers, it follows straightforwardly from D&V's posited base position of the Pred head in the hierarchy of functional projections in HC. There is thus nothing special to say in this regard. The difficulty rather lies in accounting for the distribution of the allomorph (*s*)*e* with TMA morphemes.

As noted above, *se* is either in complementary distribution with TMA markers or it must precede them. Examples of the former pattern can be seen most clearly in examples like (41) in which the subject is a weak pronominal form.

- (41) \*Li (se) te (se) zanmi mwen

<sup>11</sup> Note incidentally, that the pattern of *se/ye* distribution is abstractly similar to the pattern of the *que/qui* effect in French. The form *qui* appears in French in order to head govern the trace of a displaced subject (Rizzi 1991, Déprez 1994). In all other cases, *que* is the only allowable form for C°. Comparably, *ye* surfaces to head govern the trace of a displaced predicate. In all other cases, *se* is the only allowable form for Pred°. As it turns out, HC manifests a phenomenon quite comparable to the French *que/qui* effect for subject extractions. For discussion see Koopman (1982) Déprez (1992) and DeGraff (1992a)

He was my friend

Examples of the latter pattern involve dislocation as in (42), with *se* occupying the subject position. I return to this pattern below.

(42) Jan, se te zanmi mwen  
John, SE PAST friend 1<sup>st</sup>S

D&V propose to account for the complementary distribution in (41) at the morpho-phonological level rather than at the syntactic level. Their suggestion is that the cliticization of the weak form *e* to TMA markers has the effect of creating iatus situations that result in the deletion of the vowel *e*, and consequently, in the apparent disappearance of the Pred head. As is rather well known, TMA markers display various kinds of phonological reduction rules. For instance, the PAST marker *te* reduces to *t* whenever it precedes a TMA marker starting with a vowel. Thus *te+ap* → *tap*, *te+a(va)* → *ta*. Similarly, *pa* reduces to *p* in comparable environments *pa+ap* → *p'ap*. D&V's proposal is that *e* is subject to comparable reductions with *te+e* → *te*, *pa+e* → *pa* etc, thus accounting for the apparent disappearance of *e*.

What remains unclear on this approach is why *s* should also disappear in such situations. D&V make no specific proposal in this regard, but a possible suggestion may be to assume that *e* must obligatorily cliticize to some overt functional element. Since this requirement can be satisfied whenever a TMA marker is present, *s* is not needed. In the absence of any other functional element, however, *s* the assertive particle would have to surface to provide an adequate cliticization site for *e*<sup>12</sup>.

### 1.7 Remaining Problems:

Let us finally consider the dislocated pattern. Recall that rather surprisingly given D&V's set of assumptions, *se* in these cases must precede the relevant TMA markers.

(43) Jan se te zanmi mwen  
John was my friend

As first noted by Damoiseau (1985) and as thoroughly argued by Déprez and Vinet (1992) and following with a variety of syntactic tests, the preverbal NPs in these cases is not in standard subject position. It must be dislocated. There are, furthermore, strict agreement restrictions on the dislocated constituent --- the dislocated constituent must always be 3<sup>rd</sup> person --- that are not present with the regular non-dislocated pattern. These conditions are briefly illustrated below:

(44)	a.	Li se zanmi mwen He SE friend 1 <sup>st</sup> S He is my friend	a'.	Ou se zanmi mwen You SE friend 1 <sup>st</sup> S You are my friend
	b.	*Li, se te zanmi mwen	b'.	*Ou, se te zanmi mwen

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Fattier(1996:222) notes one example of copula that surfaces as *e* rather than *se*. [apa *li* ! é li sa !] (vernac./20) that she translates : Le voilà ! C'est lui ça. Here he comes. It's him that This example is particularly interesting in that it shows a copula separated from a demonstrative pronoun that occurs at the end of the sentence. [m kɔ̃n fè file, m<sub>e</sub>syé é pèc tire li fè (vernac./20)] Je pêche au filet, monsieur, c'est (la) pêche-tireur (qu') il fait.

He, SE PAST friend 1<sup>st</sup>S  
 c. Li-mèm, se te zanmi mwen  
 Him-self, SE PAST friend 1<sup>st</sup>S

You, SE PAST friend 1<sup>st</sup>S  
 c'. \*Ou-mèm, se te zanmi mwen  
 Your-self, SE PAST friend 1<sup>st</sup>S

(44) shows that weak pronominal forms, such as *ou* and *li*, that cannot be dislocated are incompatible with a pre TMA *se* (44b,b'), even though they are fully compatible with a regular predicative *se* (44a,a'). In contrast, strong pronominal forms, such as *li-menm* (44c), and regular NPs (43) that can occur in dislocated positions are compatible with the former if they are 3<sup>rd</sup> person, but not if they are 2<sup>nd</sup> (or 1<sup>st</sup>) person pronouns like *ou-menm*. Quite notably, the above restrictions on the dislocated examples show a striking similarity with comparable French facts featuring dislocated pronominal topics and the expression *c'est*:

(45) Lui, c'est/c'était mon ami  
 Him, it was my friend

\*Toi, c'est/c'était mon ami  
 You, it was my friend

What this comparison suggests is that *se* in (44b,c) and (44b'c') above has a behavior comparable to that of the French expletive deictic pronominal form *ce* in (45). It can only associate with nominals and with 3<sup>rd</sup> person strong pronominal form. It is important to note, however, that this behavior clearly contrasts with that of the regular predicative *se* in (44a) and (44a'), which is evidently compatible with pronominal forms of all person features. In short, what is shown here, is that HC *se* seems to behave like its French counterpart *c'est* only when it is the apparent subject of the sentence, and not when it occurs in regular predicative sentences. This is where the origin of D&V's proposal about the ambiguous attachment for *s* lies. Recall that in D&V's view, *s* can originate in the Spec position of  $\Sigma P$ , or in the Spec position of AGRP. In the former, it is an assertion particle unmarked for person features and thus compatible with all of them. In the latter, *s* is a pronominal form associated with a default (deictic) 3<sup>rd</sup> person feature.

Although this proposal is an ingenious attempt to resolve the apparent ambiguous nature of *se*, it encounters difficulties to account for the pre-TMA appearance of *se* in dislocated constructions. Indeed, it is not immediately clear how in cases like (42), *s* can be associated with *e*, which itself, under D&V's assumptions, is cliticized to the *te* marker in such structures. The question is perhaps even less obvious for examples containing both negation and *te* such as (46):

(46) Jan, se pa te zanmi mwen  
 John, it was not my friend

Clearly, *s* and *e* could not be assembled under syntactic movement over the TMA markers, as this would violate the HMC. For such cases, D&V tentatively propose that *se* is in fact a Spell Out of the AGRP *s* form, when it precedes (i.e. is cliticized to) a TMA maker to which *e* has invisibly cliticized. In support of their proposal, they note that dislocated structures like (46) appear to be restricted to occur with predicates that independently require the presence of *e* in Pred, i.e. DP predicates. Notably, indeed, such dislocated structures seem impossible with adjectival predicates<sup>13</sup>:

<sup>13</sup> Significantly, I believe, it is clear that in these cases, *se* behaves here again in striking parallelism with its French counterpart *c'est*.

\*Jean, c'est intelligent

- (47) \*Jan, se te entelijan  
John, it was intelligent

This suggests that the nature of the predicate matters for dislocated structures like (46), a fact which D&V propose to interpret as a reflection of the necessary presence of *e* in the underlying structure for *s* in AGRP to be spelled out as *se*. Incidentally, DeGraff criticized D&V's proposal on the basis of the fact that *s* never occurs alone as a possible form in Creole<sup>14</sup>. It would appear, however, that this may not be the case for all dialects of Creole. Sylvain (1938) indeed notes an interesting example where *s* appears alone, plausibly due to a further morpho-phonological reduction to avoid iatus:

- (48) *S' ava papa ou* (Sylvain p108)  
Se FUT father 2<sup>nd</sup>P  
This will be your father

Notably, in similarity with D&V's proposal, Sylvain takes *se* in what she calls "nominal sentences" (i.e. sentences in which *se* is the sole apparent subject and the predicate is a DP) as a variant of the demonstrative pronoun *sa* which is spelled out as *se*:

- (49) Employé comme sujet dans une phrase nominale, il ( le pronom démonstratif *sa*)  
se présente sous la forme *se* par influence du français *c'est*. (p 57).

Used as a subject in a nominal sentence, it (the demonstrative pronoun *sa*) presents itself under the form *se* due to the influence of the French form *c'est*.

The quotes is illustrated with the following equivalent sentences, which clearly take pre-TMA *se* as an equivalent variant of the demonstrative pronoun *sa*.

- (50) a. *Se te li = sa te li = c'était lui* (Sylvain p57)  
Se Past 3<sup>rd</sup>S = this Past 3<sup>rd</sup>S = this was him  
b. *Se pa nou = sa pa nu = ce n'est pas nous*  
Se Neg 1<sup>st</sup>P = this Neg 1<sup>st</sup>P = this was not us

Although (50) lends some empirical plausibility to the idea that pre-TMA *se* may well be a pronominal form whose spell out as *se* is in some sense "phonologically accidental", there appear nevertheless to be in fact some stronger reasons to doubt the correctness of D&V's particular proposal for the pre TMA "pronominal" *se*. As noted by Lumsden (1990), *se* can in fact appear as the apparent sole subject of an adjectival predicate in examples like (51), when no overt dislocated constituent is present.

- (51) *Se vrè*  
SE true  
It is true

Importantly, in such cases, it seems that the co-presence of negation or other TMA markers is possible, with *se* again in a preceding position.

- (52) a. *Se pa vrè*

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John, it was intelligent

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, Fattier (1996) also notes one example where the copula appears as *e* rather than *se*.  
[apa *li* ! é *li* sa] (vernac./20) Fattier (1996): 222  
le voilà! C'est lui sa  
Here he comes! That's him !

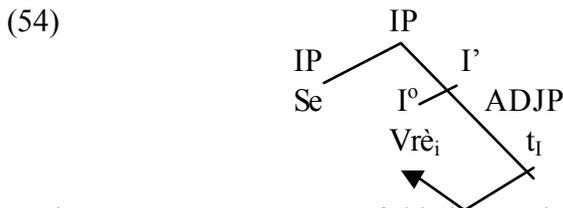
- SE not true
- b. Se te vrè
- SE PAST true

Similar cases are also apparently rather common with PP predicates like (53) :

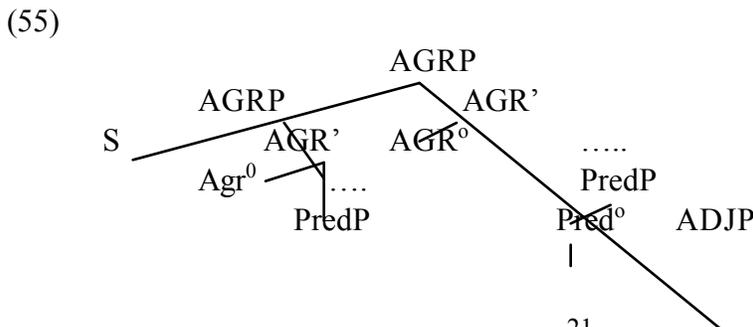
- (53) Premye pa a, se pou n chache anpil sipò. E. Vedrine
- First step the, SE for us look a lot of support
- The first step, it is for us to look for a lot of support

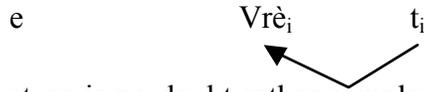
The problem that these examples present for D&V's proposal is that there is in such cases no clear source for the presence of an underlying *e* which could influence the surfacing of the AGRP *s* as *se*. Indeed, the type of predicates found in these examples could have raised up to the head of Pred. If so, pre-TMA *se* in these cases at least, simply could not be the Spell Out of *s+e*, with the weak form *e* invisibly cliticized onto the TMA marker. In short, what this data clearly show is that the possibility of a pre-TMA *se* does not always depend on the presence of *e* in Pred. If so, D&V's attempted reduction between the copular *se/ye*, i.e. the one occurring in Pred head and the "pronominal" *se*, i.e. the one occurring in Spec AGRP is incomplete, as it leaves examples like (51) unexplained.

Note, however, that data like (51) to (53) are not, strictly speaking, incompatible with D&V's proposal. The only analysis I am aware of for these examples is the one proposed by Lumsden (1990) that could well be adapted for D&V's proposal. Lumsden (1990) solution for examples like (51) is to propose a bi-clausal structure, where *se* is a "pro-sentence" element that forms one clause in the subject position of the other.



An important consequence of this interesting proposal is that *se* is not directly related to the adjectival predicate, since, strictly speaking, it is not part of the same clause. Hence its presence does not interfere with the raising of the predicate. Adapting this idea to D&V's proposed model would imply the more complex structure in (55), with *s* is in the Spec AGRP of the subject sentence and *e*, in its Pred position, while the adjective forms the predicate raised in Pred of the main AGRP sentence.





But positing such a structure is no doubt rather complex and raises non trivial questions as to the potential semantic of a clause formed of  $s+e$ . Given that as discussed above, the proposal that  $s$  can occur in Spec  $\Sigma P$  also raises questions with regards to its non-appearance with  $ye$ , it would seem that, although not a priori impossible, the bi-morphemic approach to  $se$  is quite cumbersome. Since in any event for D&V,  $s$  must occupy two distinct positions, it may be simpler to just assume that the whole element  $se$  can in fact occur in two distinct positions and to abandon the idea that it is composed of two distinct morphemes.

### 1.8 Summary

To sum up, as I have tried to show above, D&V (1997) approach operates a rather successful reduction between the  $se$  occurring in predicative constructions like (1), the  $se$  occurring in cleft constructions and the element  $ye$ . For dislocated constructions like (46), however, and constructions where  $se$  appears alone as a sentential subject like (51), i.e. for the more “pronominal” uses of  $se$ , D&V proposal appears less successful. The idea that  $se$  is bi-morphemic, which was D&V’s attempt to resolve the apparent dual character of  $se$ , although a priori attractive, seems to run into a certain number of executional problems, in particular, when details of the cliticization process between  $s$  and  $e/ye$  are focused on. Although a more sophisticated approach to the morpho-phonology of HC may shed some light on this issue, it would seem, at this point, that positing two distinct positions for the entire morpheme  $se$  may be simpler. I return to such a proposal below after reviewing DeGraff’s (1992) proposal, which in contrast to D&V, is an attempt to generalize the (pro)nominal nature of  $se$ .

## 2. DeGraff’s 1992 analysis:

### 2.1 Basic assumptions of the analysis:

The central idea of DeGraff (1992)’s analysis is that  $se$  in predicative sentences is always a nominal pro-form. More specifically, DeGraff proposes that  $se$  is a last resort element that spells out the non-governed trace of the subject of a small clause after its movement to Spec IP. Following Stowell (1983) and Couquaux (1981) among others, DeGraff assumes that copular constructions are made up of a small clause dominated by a temporal structure IP (for short), in which TMA markers may occur. (56a) and (56b) represent respectively the proposed underlying and derived structures for examples like (1):

- (56) a. [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>I'</sub> *Infl* [<sub>SC</sub> Jan [<sub>NumP</sub> [<sub>Num</sub> yon [<sub>NP</sub> doktè ]]]]]]  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> Jan<sub>i</sub> [<sub>I'</sub> *Infl* [<sub>SC</sub> se<sub>i</sub> [<sub>NumP</sub> [<sub>Num</sub> yon [<sub>NP</sub> doktè ]]]]]]

In (56b), *se* is an anaphoric element that spells out the trace left by the movement of the small clause subject *Jan* to the Spec of IP. According to DeGraff, the Spell out of the subject trace as *se* is necessary in this case for two reasons. First, because the small clause subject originates as an adjunct to the NumP projection, its trace cannot be properly governed by the head of Num or by the nominal predicate. Second, because Infl<sup>o</sup> is a functional element and is radically empty, it too fails to head govern the trace of the SC subject. These two factors combine to ensure that the SC subject trace remains ungoverned in violation of the ECP. As a consequence such structure would be excluded, were they not rescued as a last resort by the resumptive Spell out of the trace as *se*, which eliminates the ECP violation.

There are thus in DeGraff's analysis two central factors governing the presence of *se*, the base position of the SC subject and the nature of the head dominating it. In the next sections, I will spell out how these two factors come into place to explain the distribution of *se* with regards to various kinds of predicates and with respect to TMA markers. I will also consider some theoretical consequences of this analysis for the grammar of HC as well as empirical consequences with respect to the other uses of *se* in cleft and dislocated constructions and to potential relation to *ye*. A powerful motivation for DeGraff's claim that *se* in (1) is a resumptive pronoun is the intuitively attractive unification it should permit with what I have called above the pronominal uses of *se* (46) and (51), where *se* appears to essentially act as the sole subject of the sentence. In DeGraff's own word, "the verbal-*se* hypothesis has one disadvantage: it must postulate the *se* is categorially ambiguous: verbal when head-governing SC-SP and nominal when occurring as a pronoun in Spec IP...In that sense, the nominal-*se* analysis ... seems preferable since it assumes that *se* is uniformly nominal." (p130 section 3.5.1.). As it turns out, the following section will show that a complete unification of the two uses of *se* is in fact not achieved under DeGraff's proposed analysis. As a consequence, the analysis of *se* as a resumptive nominal appears to be robbed of its central motivation.

## 2.2 *Se* with distinct predicates:

As noted above, one of the crucial factors responsible for the emergence of *se* in DeGraff's analysis is the base position of the subject. It is essentially through variations on this position that the analysis deduces the distribution of *se* with distinct predicates. DeGraff's central claim is that predicates vary as to their ability to license directly the subject of the small clause which is part of the structure of predicative constructions. In his view, adjectival prepositional and nominal predicates, i.e. lexical predicates are all capable of directly licensing a subject in their specifier positions. NumP predicates, and DP predicates on the other hand, are unable to. As a consequence, with adjectival, prepositional and bare NP predicates, the subject of the small clause is directly generated in the specifier of the predicate's projection as in (57):

- (57) [AP SC-Spec [Adj' A<sup>o</sup> ]]  
       [PP SC-Spec [P' P<sup>o</sup> ]]  
       [NP SC-Spec [N' N<sup>o</sup> ]]

With DP and NumP predicates on the other hand, the subject of the small clause is generated in a position adjoined to the maximal projection as in (58):

- (58)  $[_{NumP} SC\text{-}Subj [_{NumP} \dots [_{Num'} Num^0 ]]]$   
 $[_{DP} SC\text{-}Subj [_{DP} \dots [_{D'} D^0 ]]]$

DeGraff's makes the further hypothesis, that this difference entails a difference in the government capacity of this SC subject position. Subjects generated in the Spec of a head can be directly governed by it, under m-command. Subject adjoined to the maximal projection of a head fail to be governed by it, because they fail to be m-commanded (They are not dominated by their maximal projection but only by a segment of it). The relevant consequence for the distribution of *se* is that *se* must surface only with predicates that have adjunct subjects. With other predicates, since the trace of the small clause subject is properly governed from the start, the resumptive strategy is never needed and hence, assuming Economy, never possible.

It is interesting to note that this analysis, although rather different in spirit from the one proposed in D&V (1992), (1997), makes essentially the same predictions with respect to the emergence of *se* in simple predicative sentences. By and large the crucial distinction for both proposals is whether or not the relevant predicate is dominated by a functional projection. For D&V, the functional projection acts as a blocker for movement to Pred<sup>o</sup>, for DeGraff, it forces the generation of the small clause subject in an adjunct position of a functional projection and entails its lack of head government. The intuitions at the basis of the two proposals are also similar. Both are based on the idea that thematic role assignment and predication are straightforward with lexical categories but must be mediated whenever a functional category intervenes. There is thus a priori, no empirical issue distinguishing the two approaches.<sup>15</sup> The differences, rather, concern compatibility with general views on thematic relations. I leave it to the reader to assess each view against their own favorite thematic theory.

As noted by DeGraff himself, this part of his proposal does not entail the nominal character of *se*. A possible alternative that he considers and rejects would assume that *se* is a verbal element introduced in the exact same cases (last resort) to head govern the adjoined trace of the displaced subject (cf. English do-support)<sup>16</sup>. On such a view, *se*

<sup>15</sup> A small technical point of Degraff analysis remains unclear to me. Although he argues very carefully that a subject cannot be generated in Spec DP or NumP, it is unclear to me how structures with a subject generated in Spec NP that would then move through Spec NumP before reaching Spec IP as in (i) below would be excluded.

- (i)  $[_{IP} Jan_i Infl [_{NumP} [_{Num} yon [_{NP} t_i doktè]] t_i' ] ]$

The point may be important because on DeGraff's assumptions, both traces  $t_i$  and  $t_i'$  would in principle be head governed (i.e. m-commanded), as they each occur in a Spec position and not in an adjunct position. If so, there is no ECP violation in such a derivation and *se* should not be obligatory, contrary to facts. According to DeGraff (1992) movement through Spec NumP is possible in DPs such as *yon jwèt timoun lan*. P119. The DP *timoun lan* goes through Spec NumP before reaching Spec DP where it is Case marked. This does not lead to an ECP violation so the trace in Spec NumP must be properly head governed.

- (xi)  $[_{DP} [D' [_{NumP} [_{Num'} [_{Num0} yon [_{NP} jwèt e_1 ]]] e_1' ] [D^0 0]] [_{Dpi} ti\text{-}moun lan ]]$   
 A toy of the child

<sup>16</sup> As acknowledged by DeGraff himself, this alternative suggestion is due to Sabine Iatridou.

would not be a nominal element but rather a verbal element comparable to TMA markers in the sentential structure of HC head governing the trace of the displaced subject:

(59) [<sub>IP</sub> Jan<sub>i</sub> *Infl* [<sub>VP</sub> *se* [<sub>NumP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>NumP</sub> [<sub>Num'</sub> yon [<sub>NP</sub> doktè]]]]]]

DeGraff rejects this option on the belief that it would require positing a dual status for *se*, verbal for the regular cases of predication, nominal for the dislocated cases in (46). He thus chooses to consider *se* as a resumptive pronominal and goes on to provide evidence for its nominal nature. Before considering this evidence, I will briefly sum up DeGraff's proposal for the complementary distribution between TMA markers and *se*, as it present clear parallels with the 'verbal' alternative considered here for *se*.

### 2.3 On the complementary distribution of *se* with TMA markers and negation.

Recall that the second factor enforcing the presence of *se* in structures like (56b) above is the radical emptiness of *Infl* and its intrinsic inability to head govern the adjoined trace of the displaced small clause subject. As is immediately evident, the introduction of any TMA marker and/or negation brings a change to this factor. If as DeGraff assumes, TMA markers are verbs, then it is not surprising that they have the ability to head govern the adjoined trace of the displaced subject :

(60) [<sub>IP</sub> Jan<sub>i</sub> *Infl* [<sub>VP</sub> *te* [<sub>NumP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>NumP</sub> [<sub>Num'</sub> yon [<sub>NP</sub> doktè]]]]]]

The complementary distribution of *se* and TMA markers thus follows straightforwardly, provided that *se* is assumed to be possible only when head government fails, never when it is satisfied. The same approach extends to negation, which DeGraff argues to always be a head in HC. In cases like (61), Neg is the relevant head governor of the adjoined subject trace, which can then not be spelled out as *se*:

(61) [ Jan<sub>i</sub> *Infl* [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>Neg'</sub> pa [<sub>NumP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>NumP</sub> [<sub>Num'</sub> yon [<sub>NP</sub> doktè]]]]]]]]

As noted by DeGraff, this approach also extend to another interesting case of apparent complementary distribution illustrated in (62):

(62) Kim o ulni (?? s ey) o ndoktè doktè | Aristide DeGraff p92  
3.1.1(7d)

Who KI SE a doctor | doctor the | Aristide

Who is a/the doctor | Aristide

As (62) shows, *se* can be missing when the subject of a predicative sentence is extracted. According to DeGraff, this is because the complementizer *ki* can optionally serve as the appropriate head governor for the adjoined trace of the small clause subject.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, *ki* in such cases must fulfill the double task of head governing both the IP subject trace and the SC subject trace. This requires somewhat of an unusual extension of the head government relation. But, according to DeGraff this unusual extension is what explains the fact that the presence of *se* is optional in subject extraction structures, rather than impossible. It was observed by D&V, that the presence of *se* in examples such as (59) seems to make an interpretation difference. When *se* is present the meaning of the question appears to shift towards a rhetorical interpretation. D&V hypothesize that this meaning shift is due to the added presence of *s* in Spec ΣP, which adds an assertive value, not present when *e* alone cliticizes to *ki* with an ensuing vowel reduction and an apparent disappearance.

DeGraff's proposal thus leads to a simple and elegant account of the complementary distribution of *se* and TMA markers. Since TMA serve as head governors for the SC subject trace, *se* is not required. One notable aspect of this account that contrasts with D&V's conclusion, is that TMA markers are assumed to be proper head governors in HC. This follows in part from DeGraff's proposal that TMA are verbs, but not fully since both Neg<sup>o</sup> and the complementizer *ki* in (62) above clearly must be assumed to head functional projections. The assumption that TMA are proper head governors has in turn non trivial consequences on the distribution of *ye*. Recall that D&V proposed that the insertion of *ye* was necessary precisely because TMA markers are not head governors (cf (40) above) and thus fail to appropriately head govern the trace of a displaced predicate. Clearly this approach to *ye* is not available under DeGraff's analysis, which, hence, entails almost necessarily that *se* and *ye* must be distinct elements and moreover, that *ye* must not have properties that are different from those of TMA markers. This is indeed what DeGraff concludes, but, as will be argued below, DeGraff's characterisation of the difference between *se* and *ye* appears to suffer from empirical shortcomings.

#### 2.4 Evidence for the nominal character of *se*

Before reviewing DeGraff's evidence for the nominal character of *se*, it is important to clarify some of the theoretical consequences of his proposal. The idea that *se* is a resumptive nominal for the subject of predication has as one of its central consequence that *se* must be understood to be the tail of a A-chain. This entails that it must have anaphoric properties and that like others traces of A-chain, it must be bound within its clausal domain. Although cases of resumptive pronouns of A' chains have been commonly discussed in the literature (see for instance Sells 1984 or Demirdache 1992), resumptive nominals of A-chains are less commonly discussed and in many cases still the subject of much debate. One particularly interesting potential case of resumption in A-chains is found in what has come to be known as copy-raising constructions. These constructions involve subject raising out of tensed clauses with an overt pronominal copy in the base position of the raised subject. As it turns out, Haitian Creole is a language where constructions such as (63) (Déprez 1992) have been argued to illustrate this possibility (Moore 1998):

- (63)           Jan te sanble li te entelijan  
                   John Past seem 3<sup>rd</sup>S Past smart  
                   John seemed to be smart

If such constructions are indeed cases of resumption with A-chains (Moore 1998), the expectation is that they should show some parallelism with DeGraff's proposed *se* A-chains and perhaps provide supporting evidence for his approach. As far as I have been able to determine, however, *se* never appears to be able to serve as a resumptive pronominal copy for the subject of these copy-raising constructions. The following raising example is discussed in DeGraff (1992):

- (64) Bouki genlè e<sub>i</sub> se yon dokte  
 Bouki appears to be a doctor

Superficially, (64) appears to manifest exactly the desired phenomenon with *se* as a resumptive element in a raising structure. However, as DeGraff himself concludes, *se* in this case must be assumed to occur in the “regular” position for predicative sentences, (i.e. Spec of the small clause in DeGraff’s view, head of Pred<sup>o</sup> in D&V view) and not in the IP Spec position from which the raising presumably took place. That is, the structure of examples like (64) must contain a “subject” trace independent of the one spelled out by *se* as indicated in DeGraff’s own example by the presence of *e<sub>i</sub>*. Evidence for this is provided by the fact that *se* in such cases is incompatible with TMA markers. In this respect, it clearly acts like a predicative *se* and unlike the pronominal *se* in Spec IP which as was shown above must precede TMA markers.

- (65) Bouki genlè (\*se) te yon doktè  
 Bouki seems Se Past a doctor

Further confirmation comes from a comparison with raising examples with *sanble*. For a number of speakers I consulted over the years, *sanble* unlike *genlè* requires the presence of a resumptive pronoun in front of the embedded predicate for all cases of raising. That is, with a predicate like *sanble*, (66a) is the only possible raising form, not (66b):

- (66) a. Jan sanble li entelijan  
 Jan seems 3sg intelligent  
 b. \*Jan sanble entelijan  
 John seems intelligent

For further similar data see Pompilus (1976) and Déprez (1992). Under a copy-raising analysis of such constructions, *li* is the resumptive copy of the subject *Jan*. What is notable for these speakers, is that *se* can never occur in place of *li*. That is, examples like (67) are unacceptable:

- (67) \*Jan sanble se entelijan  
 John seems SE intelligent

Moreover, in raising structures with DP predicates, the presence of a pronominal copy appears necessary in addition to *se*:

- (68) a. Jan sanble li se zanmi ou  
 John seems he SE friend you  
 John seems he is your friend  
 b. \*Jan sanble se zanmi ou<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Care must be taken to not confuse these examples with examples where Jan is left dislocated from the embedded clause, with an intonational pause.

John seems SE friend your  
John seems to be your friend

(68b) shows that *se* cannot here serve the dual role of resumptive clausal subject and resumptive small clause subject at the same time.<sup>19</sup> The ungrammaticality of (67) and (68b) is of course straightforwardly predicted under D&V analysis of *se* as the head of Pred<sup>o</sup>. They simply lack the required copy just like (66b) above. How to exclude (67) or (68b) on DeGraff's view, however, is not so straightforward. The fact that some resumptive element is required in these constructions suggests that the embedded subject position is not properly head governed. In this regard then, *se* would not be prevented from appearing in (68) because of head government from *sanble*. The position is also clearly the tail of an A-chain, at least under a copy raising analysis, and in this sense, it should have anaphoric properties. Given these properties, it is unclear how, formally at least, the properties of the subject position of the raising clause in (67/68b) can be assumed to differ from the properties of the subject position of the small clause in (56b). There is, as far as I can see, only one possible difference. It could be assumed that the embedded clause in (67/68b) is a binding domain for the subject position, with the consequence that a strongly anaphoric *se* would fail to be properly bound, and hence be excluded. In contrast, the small clause in (56) would not constitute a binding domain for its subject position, so that *se* could be appropriately bound by the IP subject. Although this is a priori possible, it remains unclear how these two binding domains could be distinguished. What is clear, however is that they must be defined independently of head government, since head government appears to fail in both. The problem on this view is that it is hard to see how a copy raising analysis could be maintained for examples like (63) if the resumptive element *li* must be assumed to be in a different binding domain from the raised subject<sup>20</sup>. On this assumption indeed, the dependency between the raised subject and the resumptive element resembles A'-chain, not A-chains. And consequently, chances of finding in HC independent support for the existence of resumptive elements in

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(i) Jan, sanble se zanmi ou

In this case, of course, the pronominal copy is not needed since there is no raising from the embedded subject position. *se* is here the pronominal subject of the embedded clause as in the presumably French equivalent:

(ii) Jean, il semble que c'est ton ami.  
John, it seems that it is your friend

<sup>19</sup> Presumably examples like (i) with *se* in Spec IP and *se* in Spec SC are excluded by some kind of ban against the overt repetition of identical elements .

(i) \*Jan sanble se se zanmi ou

<sup>20</sup> See in particular Déchaine & Manfredi (1988) for independent evidence that *li* can have anaphoric properties in other constructions than the copy raising construction. As they show, *li* can be used as an anaphor in some simple reflexive constructions. Thus, while there is independent evidence for the potential anaphoric status of *li*, independent evidence for the anaphoric status of *se* is lacking. As seen above, *se* in fact appears rather to have clear pronominal properties since it can be bound by an element in A' position (46) and it can occur without any apparent binder (48).

A-chains simply evaporate. This leave us with the somewhat strange conclusion that if *se* is treated as the anaphoric resumptive element of an A-chain, then *li* in (63) cannot be, and vice versa.

These largely theoretical consequences do not, of course, strike any fatal blow to DeGraff's proposal. They simply indicate that other apparent resumptive A-chain constructions in the language do not in effect provide independent support for his A-chain resumptive account of *se*. In this sense, then, *se* A-chains are unique in the grammar of HC. As other potential A-chain cases, such as raising chains or derived subject chains never license *se* in their tail positions, they can provide no independent evidence for the existence of comparable resumptive A-chains within the Haitian grammar.

Let us now turn to DeGraff's evidence for the nominal character of *se*. These evidence essentially revolve around independent arguments that *se* can play the role of a resumptive pronoun elsewhere than in the specifier position of a predicative small clause. DeGraff starts by establishing that resumptive pronouns constructions are indeed represented in HC, giving evidence for A'-bound resumptive pronouns in island contexts such as (69):

- (69) Chen m te kase pat \*(li) a te mòde m  
 dog 1sg PAST break leg 3sg the PAST bite 1sg  
 The dog whose leg I broke bit me

He goes on to provide another island context where *se* in turn appears to play the role of a resumptive pronoun:

- (70) Kimoun ou te mande m [si se yon pwofesè]  
 Who 2sg PAST ask me if SE a professor  
 Who did you ask me whether s/he is a professor

According to DeGraff, *se* in (70) is in Spec IP and serves as a resumptive pronoun for the extracted subject *kimoun*. This follows on his view from the fact that ECP would otherwise be violated, as the trace of the extracted subject of the island would fail to be properly governed. As he notes, however, both (71) and (72) are possible alternatives for (70):

- (71) Kimoun ou te mande m [si li yon pwofesè]  
 Who 2sg PAST ask me if 3sg a professor  
 Who did you ask me whether s/he is a professor  
 (72) Kimoun ou te mande m [si li se yon pwofesè]  
 Who 2sg PAST ask me if 3sg SE a professor  
 Who did you ask me whether s/he is a professor

As (72) clearly shows, *se* can appear in a post-subject position and this must then be the regular "predicative" *se* (in Spec of SC) with *li* as resumptive pronoun. Given (72), one may ask whether there can be any independent evidence that *se* in (70) is not in fact the *se* in the lower Spec of SC.<sup>21</sup> The conclusion appears to be based on a pure theoretical

<sup>21</sup> The sentence in (i) could perhaps provide stronger evidence. In this example, since *se* precedes the TMA marker *te*, it must be in Spec IP. DeGraff, however, does not provide this example and I have as of yet not been able to verify it with my informants.

reasoning. The point is that if *kimoun* is indeed extracted from the subject position inside the island, then ECP should rule this structure out. But since the sentence (70) is acceptable, then *se* must here serve as the A'-bound resumptive pronoun responsible for removing the ECP violation. Note however, that if this theoretical conclusion is correct, so that *se* can indeed serve as a subject resumptive pronoun in (70), then the prediction arises that *se* should be able to occur in the same resumptive environments as other resumptive pronouns in the language. This prediction, however, does not turn out to be verified. It seems, on the contrary, that outside of case like (70), *se* cannot alternate with *li* as a resumptive pronoun. *Se* for instance cannot be used instead of *li* in other cases of subject extraction out of island contexts like the one in (73):

- (73) Kimoun ou pral mande laprès si li te mouri  
 \*Kimoun ou pral mande laprès si se te mouri  
 Who you Fut ask the press if he Past dead  
 Who did you ask the press whether he died

To account for the ungrammaticality of (73), DeGraff suggests that *se* is excluded there because of its anaphoric properties. That is in (73), *se* fails to be appropriately bound. If this is correct, however, it becomes difficult to see why the same anaphoric properties should not also exclude *se* from (70). Indeed, since *se* is presumably in Spec IP in both sentences, it must have the same binding domain, however such binding domains are defined. As DeGraff notes elsewhere, *se* can manifest [+ pronominal] properties when it occurs in Spec IP. Since *se* in (70) is assumed to occur in Spec IP and to function as a A'-bound resumptive pronoun there, it should have different binding properties in (73). We seem to have reached a paradox. Either *se* can have a pronominal nature and function as a A'-bound resumptive pronoun in (70). But if so, (73) should also be possible. Or the anaphoric nature of *se* prevents it from being a resumptive pronoun in (73), but then the acceptability of (70) becomes incomprehensible.

My belief is that there may in fact be an alternative explanation for the grammaticality of (70) which solves the theoretical ECP problem without entailing that *se* ever is an A'-bound resumptive pronoun. This alternative assumes a different structure for (70) in which *kimoun* rather than being extracted from the subject position of the embedded sentence, is in fact extracted from an adjunct position in the matrix clause. Under such an interpretation the structure would be as in (74) and the meaning of such a sentence would be essentially equivalent to the translation given in (75):

- (74) Kimoun<sub>i</sub> ou te mande m t<sub>i</sub> [si se yon pwofesè]  
 Who 2sg PAST ask me if SE a professor  
 Who did you ask me whether it is a professor

(75) About whom did you ask me whether it is a professor  
 Observe, interestingly, that with comparable sentences in French, *c'est* is perfectly possible in the subject position of the embedded clause.

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(xi) Kimoun ou te mande m si se te yon pwofesè  
 Who 2nds Past ask me if it Past one professor

(76) (A propos)de qui m'as tu demandé si c'est un professeur ?

About whom did you ask me whether it is a professor

As noted above, clear pronominal cases of *se* show elsewhere a great distributional similarity with the French expression *c'est*. My suggestion then is that in examples like (70), *se* is not in fact a resumptive pronoun for the trace of an extracted subject, but simply a expletive deictic subject pronoun that happens to refer to an adjunct extracted from the matrix clause, in exactly the same way as the expletive deictic French form *ce* can refer to such an adjunct in the comparable French example (76). On the alternative presented here, *se* can be a pronoun in Spec IP in (70) without entailing the grammaticality of examples like (73), since independently of questions about resumptive pronouns, *se* can never be the subject of such predicates. As the comparison with French suggests, when *se* is a pronoun, it has like French *ce* the value of a deictic expletive pronoun and, as a consequence, it can simply never be assigned a regular thematic role. This, in the suggested view, is what is responsible for the exclusion of *se* in (73), which not surprisingly, parallels impossible sentences like (77) in French.

(77) \*A propos de qui m'as tu demandé si c'était mort

About whom did you ask me whether it was dead

To sum up, we have seen above that considering *se* as the A'-bound resumptive pronoun of an extracted subject in examples like (70) predicts that *se* should be able to occur as a resumptive pronouns in other comparable subject extraction cases like, for instance, those of (73). As this prediction is not verified, the status of *se* as a resumptive pronoun in Spec IP seems at best questionable with the consequence that the evidence presented by DeGraff for the nominal character of *se* appears rather weak. More generally, and more interestingly, the discussion above has unearthed some clear differences between the regular predicative *se* in examples like (1) and the pronominal *se* of examples (46-48) above. As noted by DeGraff himself, regular predicative *se* if a resumptive nominal must be assumed to have anaphoric properties that forces it to be bound within its immediate clausal domain. It must moreover be compatible with any type of theta-role assigned to the subject trace. Empirical evidence suggests, in contrast, that the "pronominal" *se* which precedes TMA markers does not have these properties. It clearly does not require an antecedent within the same clausal domain. In dislocated examples like (46), *se* is bound to a A' position, like pronouns in dislocated constructions and unlike anaphors that cannot be A' bound (cf. John, I like him/\*himself). In examples like (10), *se* is bound discursively, i.e. outside of the sentential domain and in examples like (51) *se* lacks any apparent binder. Given the clear diverging binding properties of the two instances of *se*, we seem again to have come to the conclusion that DeGraff's nominal proposal for predicative *se* does not succeed in fully unifying the *se* used in predicative sentences like (1) with the "pronominal" *se* present in dislocated structures like (46) and in examples like (51). Under DeGraff's view, although both *se* are assumed to be "nominal" in nature, they clearly must have distinct and in fact opposite binding properties. The predicative *se* must be an anaphor, the non-predicative one a pronoun. Recall, moreover, that as was shown in (44) above there are yet additional differences

between to two manifestations of *se*. Predicative *se* can associate with subjects of all person (44a,a'), but "pronominal" *se* is restricted to associate with 3<sup>rd</sup> person elements only, i.e. dislocated nominals or strong pronominal forms. To my knowledge, this second difference between the two cases of *se* remains unexplained on DeGraff's proposal. In short, it would appear that DeGraff's analysis does not in the end succeed in fully unifying the pronominal *se* with the regular predicative *se*, in contrast to the proclaimed goal of his proposal. As is further shown below, his analysis does not provide a possible unification between the predicative *se* and the *se* that occurs in Haitian cleft constructions nor does it indicate a way of relating *se* with the element *ye*. As a consequence, it seems that DeGraff's proposal entails that the grammar of Haitian Creole must contain several different types of *se*, an anaphoric *se* appearing in predicative sentences such as (1), a pronominal *se* appearing in dislocated structures such as (46), the *se* used in cleft sentences and yet a distinct element *ye* which is unrelated to the preceding three elements.

## 2.5 *Se* in cleft sentences

For cleft sentences such as (78) where the clefted element is a NumP predicate, Degraff proposes the structure in (79):

(78) *Se yon dokte Bouki ye*

(79) [<sub>NumP</sub> *se*<sub>i</sub> [<sub>NumP</sub> *yon doktè*]]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> *Bouki*<sub>i</sub> *ye*<sub>j</sub>]

In this structure, *se* appears in a position adjoined to NumP presumably equivalent to the position in which it appears in the non clefted corresponding sentences (80) = (1):

(80) *Bouki se yon dokte*

*Bouki SE one doctor*

DeGraff proposes that *se* is here again an anaphor of the subject *Bouki* which is properly bound at LF after the reconstruction of the NumP small clause into the position of the predicate occupied by *ye*. Although such a structure is plausible for this case, it clearly fails to extend to other kinds of cleft. The clearest difference between *se* in cleft sentences and *se* in predicative sentences is that, contrary to the latter the former appears insensitive to the type of predicate with which it co-occurs. In contrast to the predicative *se*, the cleft *se* can indifferently precede verbal, adjectival, and prepositional predicates in addition to nominal predicates with or without DP/NumP. This is shown in (81).

- (81) a. *Se*<sub>[V] *chante* ] *Jan vle chante*  
       It is to sing that John wants  
       b. *Se* [<sub>A</sub> *bel* ] *li bel*  
       He is truly handsome  
       c. *Se* [<sub>pp</sub> *nan lekòl*] *Jan ye*  
       S/he is at school  
       d. *Se* [<sub>NumP</sub> *yon dokte*] *Jan ye*  
       John is a DOCTOR  
       e. *Se* [<sub>DP</sub> *pwofesè*] *a Jan ye*  
       John is THE PROFESSOR</sub>

For the cases in (81a) to (81c), there is no *se* in the corresponding unclefted small clause and thus no obvious source for the *se* in clefts. Moreover, *se* also precedes clefted arguments for which there is simply no corresponding small clause as in (82):

(82) Se Jan Mari renmen

It is John Mary likes

As acknowledged by DeGraff himself, his proposal for *se* in predicative sentences does not extend to the full set of cleft cases. His analysis of predicative *se* thus has as a correlate that no complete unification is possible between *se* in predicative constructions, and *se* in cleft constructions.

## 2.6. The categorial status of *ye* in DeGraff's analysis

For DeGraff (1992), *ye* and *se* are fundamentally distinct elements. While *se* is a nominal resumptive pro-form that spells out a subject trace, *ye*, in contrast, is a predicative resumptive pro-form that spells out a predicate trace. To explain the appearance of *ye* in constructions with displaced predicates, DeGraff makes the assumption that predicate traces in HC contrast with argument traces in HC in being unable to ever be phonetically silent. That is predicate traces must always be “spelled out” either with predicate doubling or with *ye*. The nature of the predicate traces that can be spelled out by *ye* as opposed to doubling is clearly specified by DeGraff. They must always be [-V]. This means that the *ye* spells out predicates that can be either nominal [+N, -V] or prepositional [-N, -V], but never adjectival [+N,+V] or verbal [-N,+V]. Adjectival or verbal predicate traces instead are always spelled out as doubling copies. As was shown above, however, this proposed generalization seems incomplete. The grammar of HC seems indeed to present clear cases such as the comparative cases of (36) in which *ye* must be assumed to “spell out” the trace of an adjectival predicate. Such examples raise a serious problem for DeGraff's characterization of *ye*, since *ye* must now be assumed to be able to spell out both [-V] as well as [+V] predicate traces. Confronted with such examples, the categorial nature of *ye* thus appears to be contradictory. DeGraff's proposed analysis of *ye* thus seems to fail independently of its lack of relation to *se*. To this problem must be added the fact that positing *ye* as a fully distinct element from *se* leaves unexplained the rather striking interpretational parallelism that more detailed studies of adjectival structures with *ye* has unearthed. As there is on DeGraff's view, no reason to relate the two, the fact that they appear to play a similar role in related predicative and cleft sentences turns out to be accidental.

## 2.7 Summary

The grounding motivation for DeGraff's proposal to consider *se* as a nominal element was to achieve unification between the predicative uses of *se* and its pronominal uses. As was shown above, however, this unification is not complete. Although both occurrences of *se* can be assumed to share a nominal status, it is clear that they manifest a number of important differences with respect to their binding properties and to their feature make up and agreement possibilities that remain so far unexplained on this

approach. On DeGraff's approach, moreover, besides being different from the pronominal *se*, the *se* of predicative sentences must also be distinguished from the *se* in clefts constructions and finally, the element *se* and *ye* are assumed to have a completely different nature. It thus appears that the resumptive nominal proposal fails, at least for the moment, to have the desired unification potential that could avoid positing the existence of different elements *se* in the grammar of Haitian Creole.

### 3. Conclusion and building blocks for a new analysis.

We have seen above, that in distinct ways, both the bi-morphemic analysis of *se* proposed by D&V and the resumptive nominal analysis proposed by DeGraff fail to achieve a complete unification of the distinct occurrences of *se* in the grammar of Haitian Creole. In this section, I would like to explore somewhat different avenues for the analysis of *se* based on innovations that are part of Chomsky 1995 Minimalist program. The goal of this section is not to develop a full alternative analysis as this is beyond the scope of the present "state of the art" nature of this paper. I will be content to lay out some building blocks on which a future analysis may rest.

The central hurdle on which the above two reviewed analysis seems to have equally stumbled is an attempt to avoid positing for *se* a dual categorial nature. The data clearly reveals that *se* has both nominal aspects and verbal aspects and this can indeed be problematic if *se* had to be categorially classified as either a noun or a verb. To avoid such a problem, D&V have chosen to assume that *se* is in fact bi-morphemic, having one of its component *e* more verbal and the other of its component *s* more nominal. The central problem for this view is to succeed in keeping these two morphemes together in all cases. DeGraff in contrast, has opted to generalize the nominal nature of *se*. This, however, appears to raise problems for a full unification of all the diverse occurrences of *se*. Perhaps the simplest solution that current syntactic models afford is to avoid specifying any categorial feature for *se*. That is, the apparent contradiction between the nominal and verbal aspects of *se* seems to disappear, if *se* is assumed to be a functional projection with no categorial feature. If so, as correctly concluded in D&V's analysis, *se* is predicted to be compatible essentially with any kind of lexical categories in its various occurrences. This much, at least, seems empirically verified and, following in essence D&V's line of thought, apparent categorial restrictions on predicate compatibility can in fact be explained away under general structural constraints.

Let us then assume as a starting basis that *se* is indeed a functional head. I would further like to propose that this functional head can be Merged in different positions in the sentence. For simplicity, I would like at this point to preserve D&V's hypothesis that *se* can occur in the head of  $\text{Pred}^0$  or in  $v$  in the Minimalist approach, i.e. as the head of the lowest functional projection in the inflectional hierarchy. I would further like to propose that it can also occur in the head of  $\text{AGR}^0$ , i.e. as the head of the highest inflectional functional projection below the C complex in the inflectional hierarchy. When occurring in  $v$ , the role of *se* is to ensure that an external thematic role can be checked in

its Spec. In similarity with both D&V and DeGraff's analyses, I will assume that thematic checking can be done directly with a lexical predicate head when no functional projections intervene. I will adopt a raising proposal similar to D&V's analysis, as it appears to be in harmony with Minimalist assumptions about  $v$ . On this view, a predicate moves to  $v$  to allow checking of an external theta role by an NP in Spec  $v$ . However, when predicate raising is excluded by the HMC or RM,  $se$  is Merged in  $v$  to ensure the proper checking of the theta-feature of the subject in the  $v$  specifier. On this view then,  $se$  can be seen as a licensing head for the lower subject trace, in close similarity with the *verbal-se* option briefly explored and abandoned by DeGraff (1992). The difference under our suggestion, is that in keeping with current Minimalist assumption, the role of  $se$  is not to head govern the trace of the moved subject, but rather to allow the checking of the theta-features of the subject in the Spec of  $se$ . The close proximity of this view to Degraff's unexploited *verbal-se* option leaves open the possibility to adapt his elegant solution for the complementary distribution of  $se$  and TMA markers. Assuming for instance that when predicate raising fails, the theta features of the predicate can project as part of any functional head in HC and be checkable against the subject's theta features, it would follow that the projection of  $se$  would not be needed in the presence of other functional heads, i.e. TMA markers.

Let us now turn to  $se$  in Agr<sup>0</sup>. What I would like to suggest for this case, is that  $se$  in Agr<sup>0</sup> is there to license in its Specifier, an empty expletive that is essentially identical in nature to the French deictic expletive *ce*. That is, on this view, the suggested structure for examples with pronominal  $se$  is as follows:

(83) [<sub>AGRP</sub> PRO [<sub>Agr'</sub>  $se$  ...]

Whatever the exact properties of the empty expletive licensed by  $se$  turn out to be, I will assume that they are essentially like those of French *ce*, minimally [+deictic, +expletive]. As has been shown elsewhere, empty expletives are independently licensed in HC. For a discussion and a review of some of the data, see for instance Déprez (1994), Degraff (1992), Vinet (1991). The question of why  $se$  should be necessary to license an empty expletive in structures like (83) when it is not needed elsewhere, remains to be spelled out. The intuitive idea to be exploited here is that its necessary presence in the head of Agr<sup>0</sup> relates to the role  $se$  can otherwise play when it is Merged in Pred<sup>0</sup>/ $v$  to allow checking of the external theta role of a predicate. If  $se$  is not Merged in Pred<sup>0</sup>/ $v$ , or if there is no NP subject in the clause, then no external theta-role can be checked. The alternative then is to Merge an expletive subject that will palliate the lack of thematic subject.  $Se$  in Agr<sup>0</sup> can then be thought as functioning almost like a theta-role suppressing morpheme, licensing a null expletive when theta-checking has otherwise failed. In this respect, the situation is here different from expletive constructions in which the predicates have no external theta-role to assign to begin with, giving a basis for the presence of  $se$ .

Note that this proposal does not identify  $se$  with French *c'est* even in the pronominal case. The idea here is that  $se$  in HC is a functional head in all of its uses. It alternatively fills in the head of Pred/Tr/ $v$  or the head of Agr<sup>0</sup> and correspondingly allows or suspends theta-role checking for the subject of the predication. Hence its apparent

dual nature as an element that, on the one hand, serves to license predication (the ‘traditional’ role of a copula) and on the other hand serves to license a null expletive subject (pronominal *se*). In French, in contrast, these two tasks are clearly divided. *Est* is the verbal copula that licenses predication and *ce* the expletive nominal category that occupies the subject Specifier position when no theta-checking occurred. The relation with French is then, strictly speaking, only between the properties of the empty expletive in HC and that of the overt expletive *ce* in French. Note interestingly, that from this point of view, it seems plausible to conjecture that Haitian Creole *se* derived from the reanalysis and the subsequent grammaticalization of the two French elements as a single functional head, due perhaps in part to the HC independent option of licensing null expletive subjects, an option not available in French<sup>22</sup>.

Recall that, as was discussed above, there are some intriguing restrictions on constructions with the pronominal *se*. As a concluding footnote to this programmatic section, I would like to briefly review how the perspective briefly sketched above might provide a solution for these restrictions.

First, recall that as has been shown above in (40), “pronominal *se*” when occurring in dislocated constructions manifests a person restriction, in being compatible only with 3<sup>rd</sup> person elements. The structure (83) provides an immediate potential explanation for this intriguing restriction. It is tempting to think indeed that this person restriction is simply entailed by the presence of the null expletive in the Spec of Agr<sup>0</sup>. As is well known indeed, expletives pro-forms as well as their associates are generally restricted to 3<sup>rd</sup> person elements. A plausible source for this generalization resides in the observation that 3<sup>rd</sup> person pro-forms are in a sense the hallmark characteristics of the “non-person” (Benveniste 1976) or to put it somewhat differently, the elsewhere person feature. Indeed, if some element is unmarked for person features it will generally surface as 3<sup>rd</sup> person. On the present proposal then, the observed person restriction on the dislocated element, the expletive associate, may then be taken as a simple consequence of the presence of the null expletive in the construction. If so, it is no longer necessary to assume that *se* is ever endowed with specific person features. The fact that *se* is compatible with subjects of all persons when Merged in *v* may now be taken to reflect the mere absence of an expletive in these constructions, and the observed person restrictions with “pronominal *se*” Merged in Agr<sup>0</sup>, its presence. In other words, an attractive first consequence of the present suggestion is that there may now, strictly speaking, be no difference with respect to person features between the “predicative” *se* and the “pronominal” *se*. Both instances of *se* can be assumed to be unmarked for person

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<sup>22</sup> This conjecture leads to an interesting prediction. If as argued by Hyams (1986), among others, children start with a positively set option for null expletives, then the prediction is that the early grammar of a child acquiring French should contain a *se* comparable in large respects to the one found in HC. That this may indeed be correct is suggested by the fact that *se* appears to be used by very young children as an unanalyzed form with adjectives in sentences such as *C’est chaud* (its warm) much earlier than the appearance of the regular copula. We are presently conducting an investigation of French acquisition data to confirm this hypothesis.

features, and thus compatible with all persons, since apparent person restrictions can be deduced from the presence or the absence of an empty expletive in the relevant structures.

Note, incidentally, that the structure (83) also explains why an NP co-occurring with a “pronominal *se*” must occur in a dislocated position. As Spec AgrP is occupied by the null expletive, there is no room for an additional NP within the verbal functional structure. Dislocation is thus here simply enforced in the same way as it is in any constructions that contain a pronominal subject in Spec Agr<sup>0</sup> in Haitian Creole (see for instance, Déprez 1994 for discussion).

A third observed restriction on dislocated structures concerns the nature of the predicate. Recall that when an overt dislocated NP is present, constructions with “pronominal” *se* are not possible with all types of predicates. As shown again below in (84), although they are perfect with DP predicates, they seem impossible with adjectival predicates:

- (84) a. Jan, se te zanmi ou  
John SE Past friend 2sg  
John, it is your friend  
b. \*Jan, se te entelijan  
John SE past intelligent  
John, it is intelligent

Recall further that a similar restriction is observed in French constructions with *c'est*.

- (85) a. Jean, c'est mon ami  
John, it is my friend  
b. \*Jean, c'est intelligent  
John, it is intelligent

Given the parallelism, and given (83), it is rather tempting to try again to attribute this constraint to some property common to the null expletive in HC and to the overt expletive *ce* in French. It may be, for instance, that when such expletives are associated with an NP, a requirement to check some nominal feature, perhaps number, to satisfy an abstract agreement constraint arises. Something like this seems to be at stake in the French examples of (86), where it is clear that agreement on the verbal copula must be triggered by the number features of the predicate and/or those of the dislocated topic, not by those of *ce*, since the latter is always invariable.

- (86) a. Jean et Marie, ce sont mes amis  
John and Mary, these are my friends  
b. Jean ,c'est mon ami  
John, this is my friend  
c. \*Jean et Marie, ce sont mon/un ami  
John and Mary, these are my/a friend  
d. \*Jean et Marie, c'est un ami  
John and Mary, this is my friend  
d. ?Jean et Marie, c'est des amis  
John and Mary, this is my friends

In short, what examples like (86) seem to reveal is that some form of number agreement is taking place between the expletive, the discourse associate (i.e. the dislocated element) and the predicate, as is reflected by the form of the copula in French. In HC, of course, since agreement is always abstract, no visible effect are expected to be detectable. It is nevertheless plausible to assume that some abstract agreement may be necessary to license the expletive. Assuming that this is the case, note that NPs are in fact the only type of predicates that can bare some independent phi-features. Given this observation, this may be what is at the source of the predicate restriction in these constructions. More specifically, the idea here is to suggest that when *ce* or its null HC counterpart have an NP associate (as in *Jan, se zanmi ou* : John, it is your friend), Agr<sup>0</sup> must “probe” in Chomsky’s 1998 sense for some agreement features in the predicate and that these agreement features can be found only in predicates that contain an NP, not in any other types of predicates. This may be why DP/NP are the only predicates allowed in such constructions. In contrast, when the expletive discourse associate is a sentence or remains unspecified, the agreement requirement seems to be neutralized. On the suggested perspective, this might explain why adjectival predicates are fine in such cases (*Se vrè*). Clauses, being never marked for number features, may plausibly fail to trigger an agreement requirement in contrast to nominal associates. In this respect, the abstract agreement requirement speculated about here presents some similarity with the division between sentential and nominal expletives in English. *It*-expletives being associated with clauses never require any agreement (Cf. *It is/\*are important that...*). In contrast, *there*-expletives that are restricted to NP generally trigger an agreement requirement (Cf. *There are/\*is important issues...*).

Clearly, much further precision is needed to make the various parts of this suggested account work. It would appear, nevertheless that, even on this first pass, the idea that “pronominal *se*” is an Agr<sup>0</sup> head licensing a null expletive in its Spec has some appealing empirical consequences for the restrictions on these constructions, that have been largely left unexplained on previous views.

From the more theoretical point of view, the approach sketched in this section presents an attractive solution to the apparent dual nature of *se* by removing any need for a categorial specification. On this perspective indeed, both the “predicative *se*” and the “pronominal *se*” are functional heads that serve to license nominal Specifiers. Their differences come from the thematic properties associated with each Spec position. While the lower *v* Spec position is a thematic checking position, the higher Agr<sup>0</sup> Spec only licenses a non-thematic null expletive. On this view, the dual nature of *se* as a licenser of predication, a role comparable to that of a copula, and as a licenser of expletive constructions, begins to make sense as it essentially reduces to the independent properties associated with two distinct Merging locations.

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Some additional examples of adjectives with *ye* given in Sylvain p 44:

Fò kō li yé	= strong as he is
Gros kō li té yé	= fat as he was
Buké kō l'a-yé	= tired as she will be

The doubling pattern is also possible in these contexts:

Brigā kō l' brigā	= bad guy as he is, as bad guy as he is
Dròl kō l' té-dròl	= funny as he was as funny as he is
Bāda kō l'a bāda	= chic as he will be, as chic as he need be
Bobas kō l'ta bobas	= stupid as he would have been