

Grammatical Voice in French

(A Short Description in the Meaning-Text Framework)

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For Andrzej Bogusławski, from Montreal with love...

1. The Problem Stated

The goal of this paper is, paradoxically, very modest and very ambitious at the same time. Modest, because it does not claim a new discovery or even a new theory; based on well-known facts, I propose an answer to a seemingly innocuous question:

|| How many grammatical voices does French have and what exactly are they?

It is this attempt that turns out to be very ambitious: as far as I know, no manual or standard description of French offers a clear answer to this question, including the most complete and detailed French grammar GREVISSE/GOOSSE 1997 (cf. §§ 741ff.). Not that there are no descriptions dealing with voice in French: there are many, and some are really good—for instance, KORDI 1974, GRIMSHAW 1982, MELIS 1990, GROSS (ed.) 1993, and GAATONE 1998; in this study, I make extensive use of their analyses. However, they do not give a satisfactory answer to the above question: they do not offer a list of French voices.

The reason is obvious: these researchers do not have a rigorous definition of voice as an inflectional category of the verb and, consequently, they are in no position to distinguish with certainty a voice from what is not a voice.¹ As for the present paper, I will proceed from a definition of voice formulated in MEL'ČUK 1997 (it was first proposed in MEL'ČUK & XOLODOVIČ 1970, and then developed in MEL'ČUK 1974: 138-139, 1988: 186ff., and 1993a).

It goes without saying that my presentation will of necessity be sketchy and somewhat dogmatic; I cannot analyze details nor supply developed justifications.

2. Notion of Voice

To facilitate the reading of this paper, I reproduce here three relevant definitions: Diathesis, Basic Diathesis, and Voice.

Definition 1: Diathesis (of a Wordform)

|| The *diathesis* of a wordform **w** of a lexical unit **L** is the correspondence between its Semantic and its Deep-Syntactic Actants.

What is meant here is the correspondence between the Sem-Actant slots and the DSynt-Actant slots in the Government Pattern of the wordform **w**.

Example: the French verb PEIGNER '[to] comb someone's hair' has the following lexicographic definition:

X peigne Y, lit. 'X is-combing Y' ≈ 'X causes Y's hair to become tidy and arranged by causing an instrument to move repeatedly through Y's hair'.

X and Y are of course the Sem-Actant slots of L PEIGNER. In the sentence *Alain peigne Helen* ('Alain is combing Helen's hair'), ALAIN is the DSyntA I of PEIGNER, and HELEN—the DSyntA II. The corresponding diathesis is

X	Y
I	II

The diathesis characterizes particular inflectional forms of L (rather than L as a whole); it can be changed—by applying to the stem of the form in question some inflectional or derivational means. Modifications of the diathesis of **w(L)** by various morphological techniques constitute the core of voice and voice-related phenomena.

Definition 2: Basic Diathesis (of a Lexical Unit)

|| The *basic diathesis* of a lexical unit L is the lexicographic diathesis of L, i.e., the diathesis which corresponds to the citation form of L and must be stored in L's lexical entry (in L's Government Pattern).

The diathesis quoted for PEIGNER above is its basic, or lexicographic, diathesis.²

Definition 3: The Inflectional Category of Voice

|| *Voice* is an inflectional category whose grammemes specify such modifications of the basic diathesis of a lexical unit L that do not affect the propositional meaning of L.

Based on Definition 3 we can develop a calculus of logically possible voices (= grammemes of the category of voice). They are obtainable:

- either by PERMUTATION (of the DSyntAs of L with respect to L's SemAs): passives;
- either by SUPPRESSION (of the DSyntAs of L): suppressives;
- or by REFERENTIAL IDENTIFICATION (of the SemAs of L): reflexives.

These operations can be combined, yielding 12 possible voices (I cannot enter here into the details).

This calculus defines only IDEAL VOICES. In an actual language, a particular voice can be 'mixed,' that is, it can involve additional semantic elements that do affect the propositional meaning of L; this of course complicates the description. However, a universal system of ideal voices supplies a convenient frame of reference, or a background, against which specific voices of a concrete language can be analyzed. As we will see, some actual grammatical voices of French 'deviate' from this ideal scheme, which will be indicated in the corresponding passage.

Given the lack of space, I limit myself to this concise characterization. For all further data and explanations the reader is referred to MEL'ČUK 1997.

3. Pronominal Verbs in French

I will start the discussion of grammatical voices in French by examining a particular case: French 'pronominal' verbs, that is, verb forms accompanied by what is known as a form of the reflexive pronoun SE. To put it differently, I have to consider the status of this SE. (Many years ago, BOGUSŁAWSKI 1977 analyzed the Polish analog of the French SE: the reflexive pronoun SIĘ. This supplies a kind of justification for my choosing this topic for the present paper.)

Compare two French sentences:

(1) a. *Je me rase* 'I shave (myself)', lit. 'I shave me'.

vs.

b. *Jean me rase* 'John shaves me'.

In (1a) and (1b) we see two different wordforms **me**, which are both pronominal clitics of the 1st person singular, but belong to two different lexemes:

—in (1a), **me** is a lex of the lexeme SE \approx 'oneself', which is called a reflexive pronoun, but is not a pronoun in the strict sense of the term, see immediately below;

—in (1b), **me** is a lex of the lexeme MOI 'I'—a real personal pronoun.

If in (1b), **me** is a Direct Object [= DirO] of the verb, on the contrary, in (1a) this is not the case: here, **me** is but a marker of an inflectional form of the verb RASER '[to] shave'³—namely, of the reflexive voice. Accordingly, in (1a) **me** is not a real pronoun, but, so to speak, an 'auxiliary' one. (This fact was established in GRIMSHAW 1982: 107.)

Distinguishing the two wordforms **me** boils down to distinguishing 'real' pronouns MOI, TOI, LUI, ..., on the one hand, and the lexeme SE, on the other. This view can be buttressed by the following seven differences in the behavior of the pronoun wordforms and the SE wordforms:

- The auxiliary ÊTRE. One **me**, but not the other (i.e. SE, but not the real pronouns), requires the auxiliary ÊTRE '[to] be' rather than AVOIR '[to] have'. In French, a transitive verb is inflected in the compound tenses (*passé composé*, *infinitif passé*, etc.) with the auxiliary AVOIR, but in (1a), the auxiliary must be ÊTRE:

(2) a. *Je me suis* $\langle *a \rangle$ *rasé* 'I have [lit. am] shaved myself'.

vs.

b. *Jean m'a* $\langle *est \rangle$ *rasé* 'John has shaved me'.

- Coordination. In (1b), **me**—under the tonic form **moi**—can be conjoined with a noun, but not in (1a):

(3) a. **Je rase moi et mon frère*, ?*Je nous rase, moi et mon frère*⁴
'I shave myself and my brother'

[the correct expression: *Je me rase, et je rase mon frère*].

vs.

b. *Jean nous rase, moi et mon frère* ‘John shaves me and my brother’.

(The perfect grammaticality of the English gloss in (3a) shows that in English MYSELF is a normal element of the clause—a DirO of the verb coreferential with the subject; there is no question of a particular inflectional form of the verb.)

• Focalization. In (1a), **me** cannot be focalized, either by a cleft or by **ne ... que**, while **me** in (1b) can—without any problem, cf. (4a):

(4) **a.** *C'est moi que Jean rase / Jean ne rase que moi*
‘It is me who Jean shaves/Jean shaves only me’.

(4b) is formally of course also possible:

b. *C'est moi que je rase / Je ne rase que moi(-même),*

but here we have **me** of (1a), i.e., a lex of MOI, and not of SE, which is clearly seen from (4c):

c. *C'est moi que j'ai <*suis> rasé / Je n'ai rasé <*suis> que moi(-même),*

In (4c), **me** is a 'normal' element of the clause, a DirO, which does not change the voice of the verb and requires the auxiliary AVOIR; however, **me** in (1b) inevitably changes the voice and, as a result, the auxiliary, cf. (2).

The incapacity of **me** in (1b) to undergo focalization naturally follows from the fact that it is not an independent element of the clause and does not have an independent referent: there is, so to speak, nothing to focalize.

• Causative Construction. In French, if a transitive verb V with its DirO appears in a causative construction with FAIRE ‘[to] make’, this DirO remains the DirO of the causative construction, while the Subject of V becomes an IndirO or an OblO of the causative construction. That is what we see for sentences of (1b) type, but not for those of (1a) type:⁵

(5) **a.** *Marie le [= the Subject of *Il se rase* ‘He shaves’] fait se raser* ‘Mary makes him shave himself’.

ou

Marie fait se raser Jean ‘Mary makes Jean shave himself’
< **Marie se fait raser Jean* >.

vs.

b. *Marie le fait [= the DirO of *Jean le rase* ‘J. shaves him’]] raser par Jean* ‘Mary makes John shave him’.

ou

Marie fait raser Alain par Jean ‘Mary makes Jean shave himself’
< **Marie fait le raser par Jean* >.

SE RASER behaves as an intransitive verb, its Subject becoming the DirO of the FAIRE-construction. At the same time, the lexes of SE must be positioned between FAIRE and the infinitive of the lexical verb—as in (5a), while genuine pronominal clitics precede FAIRE, as in (5b). This is

yet another indicator that in (1a), **me** ∈ SE is not a DirO of the transitive verb, but a voice marker. (Cf. GRIMSHAW 1982: 120.)

• 'X does so too' Construction. In French, **me** in (1b) can be targeted separately by 'X does so too' expression, but not **me** in (1a):

(6) a. *Je me rase tous les matins, et Alain aussi* ⟨*tout comme Alain*⟩
 'I shave myself every morning, and A. does so too ⟨like A.⟩':
 Alain shaves HIMSELF, not me.

b. *Marie me rase tous les matins, et Alain aussi* ⟨*tout comme Alain*⟩
 'Mary shaves me every morning, and Alain does so too ⟨like A.⟩':
 Together with Mary, Alain shaves ME.

• Impersonalization. In French, a verb with a nominal Direct Object cannot appear in the impersonal construction, available to a large class of intransitive verbs, including the passives; however, a verb with a lex of SE impersonalizes easily, which shows that SE is not a DirO (see GRIMSHAW 1982: 113):⁶

(7) a. *Des milliers de pèlerins se baignent dans le Gange*
 'Thousands of pilgrims bath in the Ganges'

~ *Il se baigne dans le Gange des milliers de pèlerins,*
 lit. 'It bathes itself in the Ganges thousands of pilgrims'.

b. *Les mères baignent leurs enfants* 'Mothers bath their children',
 ~ **Il baigne les mères leurs enfants,* lit. 'It bathes mothers their children'.

• Subject Inversion in a Completive Clause. In French, an intransitive verb without Objects or Complements admits the inversion of the SSynt-Subject in a subordinate clause, while a verb with an Object, even a clitic one, does not (Wehrli 1986: 273)

(8) a. *Je me demande comment s'est rasé Paul*
 lit. 'I ask myself how himself has shaved Paul'.

~ ??*Je me demande comment les a rasés Paul,*
 lit. 'I ask myself how them has shaved Paul'.

b. *J'ignore où se rencontreront nos amis,*
 lit. 'I do not know where themselves will meet our friends',

~ ??*J'ignore où les rencontreront nos amis,*
 lit. 'I do not know where them will meet our friends'.

The seven above properties of personal pronoun lexes and of SE lexes show, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the SE lexes are by no means separate elements of the clause, i.e., pronominal objects; rather, they are analytical markers functionally similar to affixes. Since the semantic and syntactic relations between RASER et SE RASER are 100% regular (they are the same as in HABILLER ~ S'HABILLER, LAVER ~ SE LAVER, PEIGNER ~ SE PEIGNER, PROTÉGER ~ SE PROTÉGER, etc.), these two verbs cannot be considered as two different lexical units: they are

different inflectional forms of the same lexical unit RASER. Generalizing this, we can say that all French 'pronominal' verbal forms are voice forms, although it remains to be seen of what voice(s).⁷

Crucially, SE is impossible with adjectives (cf. GAATONE 1975: 205-206):

- (9) **Jean s'est fidèle* ⟨*antipathique, reconnaissant*⟩
 'Jean is faithful ⟨antipathic, grateful⟩ to himself'

[the correct expression: *Jean est fidèle* ⟨*antipathique, reconnaissant*⟩ à *lui-même*].

This follows immediately from SE being a voice marker: the adjective does not have the category of voice and thus cannot accept a voice marker.

The auxiliary lexeme SE ('the voice SE') includes 14 lexes:

me _{ACC'}	te _{ACC'}	te _{DAT'}	se _{3sg.ACC'}	nous _{ACC'}	vous _{ACC'}	se _{3pl.ACC'}
me _{DAT}	toi _{ACC'}	toi _{DAT}	se _{3sg.DAT}	nous _{DAT}	vous _{DAT}	se _{3pl.DAT}
	[with the imperative]					

The lexes of SE are pairwise homophonous. This homophony is resolved, first, by paradigmatic alternations with non-homophonous accusative *vs.* dative forms of the 3rd person (**le** *vs.* **lui**, **les** *vs.* **leur**), and second, by their syntactic behavior: with an accusative SE lex the verb becomes intransitive, with a dative SE lex it remains transitive. See also the end of Subsection 5.1, p. 00.

Note that SE and the reflexive pronoun SOI 'oneself' are different lexemes, so that there is no parallelism, or proportion—such as, for instance, **me** (as in (1b)) : MOI ≠ **se** : SOI. Compare:

- (10) a. *Jean nous rase, moi et mes amis* 'J. shaves us, me and my friends'

vs.

**Jean se rase, soi et ses amis*, lit. 'J. shaves himself and his friends'

- b. *Il faut penser à soi* 'One should think of oneself'

vs.

Il faut que je pense à moi 'I should think of myself'

vs.

Il faut qu'il pense à lui-même ⟨*à soi⟩ 'He should think of himself ⟨of oneself⟩',

which demonstrates that SOI—unlike SE—includes such forms as **lui-même**, etc.

This 'dissociation' between SE and SOI was successfully argued for in KAYNE 1977: 326-327.

4. French Voices

Based on the calculus of voices mentioned at the end of 2, I can state that all in all, the French verb has SIX grammatical voices. More precisely, the inflectional category of voice in French includes the following six grammemes:

- active: *Jean a rasé Alain* 'J. has shaved A.';
- full promotional passive: *Alain a été rasé par Jean* 'A. has been shaved by J.';
- agentless full promotional passive: *Une barbe de deux jours se rase sans difficulté*,
lit. 'A two-day beard shaves itself without difficulty';

- partial demotional passive: *Il a été procédé par le gouvernement au licenciement des fonctionnaires inutiles,*
lit. 'It has been proceeded by the government to firing useless officials';
- direct reflexive: *Je me rase* 'I shave (myself)' (see (1a)), *Alain s'est rasé* 'A. has shaved himself';
- indirect reflexive: *Alain s'est rasé la barbe* 'A. shaved his beard',
lit. 'A. has shaved the beard to himself'.

Generally speaking, in French the category of voice is applicable to all transitive verbs. However, several transitive verbs do not have the full passive (AVOIR '[to] have', measure verbs like COÛTER '[to] cost' or MESURER '[to] measure = have the length of ...', etc.; see GAATONE 1998: 92ff. for restrictions on passivizability); these same verbs and a few others do not have the partial passive, either.

On the other hand, there are a few semantically two- or three-argument intransitive verbs that admit the full promotional passive:

(11) *Alain a été obéi par tout le monde* 'Alain has been obeyed by everybody',

where OBÉIR is an intransitive verb that takes as its DSyntA **II** a phrase introduced by the preposition À 'to'.

Some other intransitive verbs admit the passive only in the impersonal construction:

(12) a. *Il a été procédé par la commission à l'analyse de données*

'It has been proceeded by the commission to an analysis of data'

b. *Il est pourvu aux intérêts de la personne par l'un des régimes de protection,*

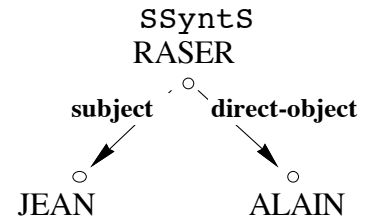
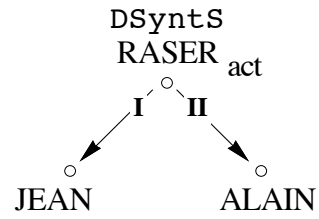
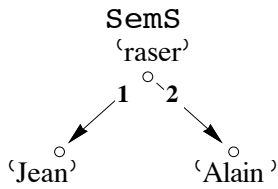
lit. 'It is provided to the interests of the person by one of the protection plans'

c. *Il a été parlé de tout et de rien,* lit. 'It has been talked about everything and nothing'.

The verbs PROCÉDER, POURVOIR and PARLER are intransitive; the passive that we see in (11) is different from the full promotional passive illustrated above (here, we have the permutation **I** ⇒ **III**, without anything becoming **I**). This is a full demotional passive (called 'essentially impersonal passive' in GAATONE 1998: 117ff., where it is described in some detail). The characterization of this voice has to be supplied with the following condition: " For several lexically marked verbs only; in the impersonal construction only."

Now I will present The Semantic, the Deep-Syntactic, the Surface-Syntactic and the Deep-Morphological Structures of the six French voice forms.

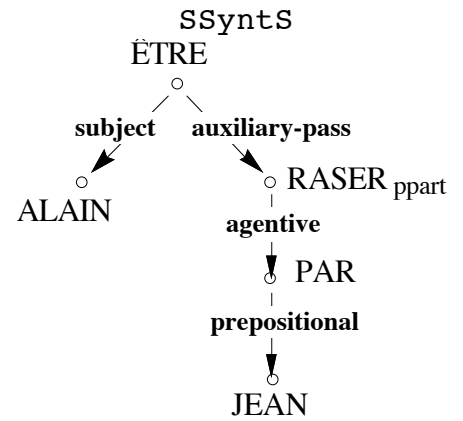
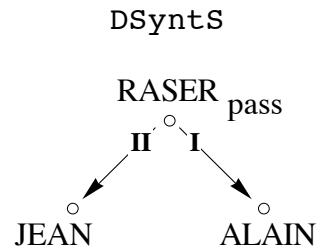
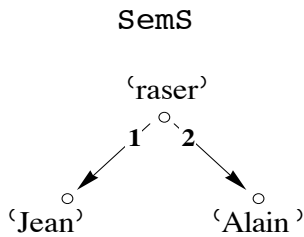
Active



DMorphS

JEAN RASER_{ind, pres, 3, sg} ALAIN [= *Jean rase Alain* 'Jean shaves Alain']

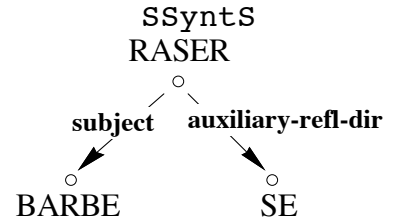
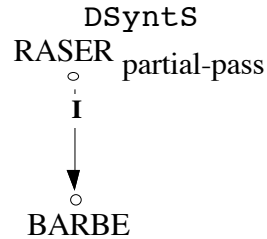
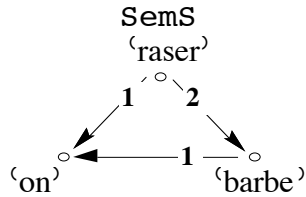
Full Promotional Passive



DMorphS

ALAIN ÊTRE_{ind, pres, 3, sg} RASER_{ppart, masc, sg} PAR JEAN
[= *Alain est rasé par Jean* 'Alain is shaved by Jean']

Agentless Full Promotional Passive

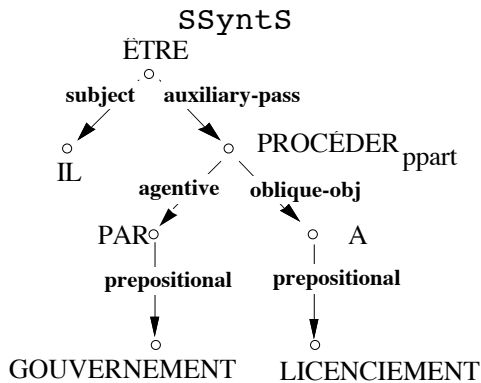
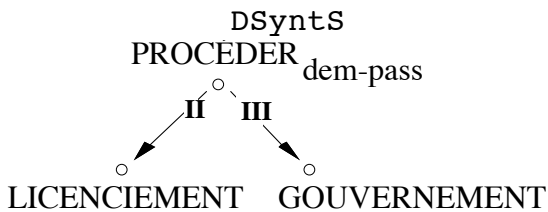
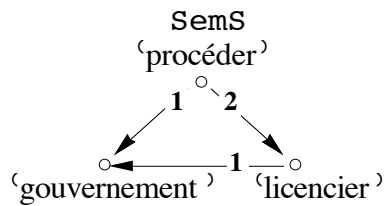


DMorphS

LE_{fem, sg} BARBE_{sg} SE_{acc} RASER_{ind, pres, 3, sg} ...

[= *La barbe se rase chaque jour*, lit. 'The beard shaves itself every day']

Partial Demotional Passive

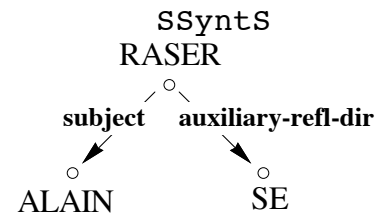
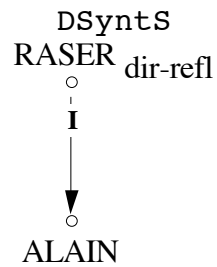
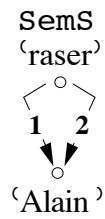


DMorphS

IL ÊTRE_{ind, pres. 3. sg} PROCÉDER_{ppart, masc, sg} PAR LE_{masc, sg} GOUVERNEMENT_{sg}
 À LE_{masc, sg} LICENCIEMENT_{sg}

[= *Il est procédé par le gouvernement au licenciement* ..., lit. 'It is proceeded by the government to firing ...']

Direct Reflexive

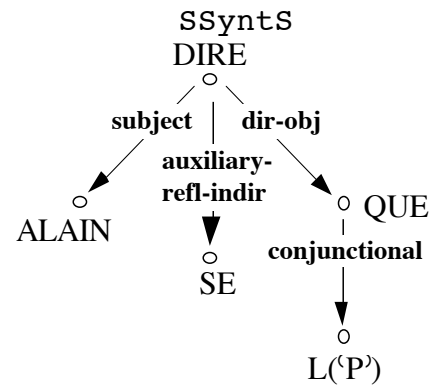
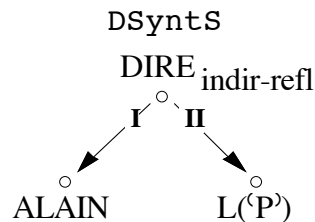
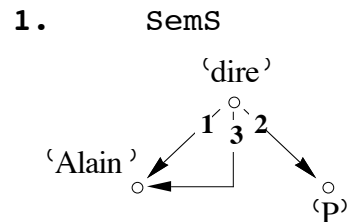


DMorphS

ALAIN SE_{acc} RASER_{ind, pres, 3, sg} [= *Alain se rase* 'Alain shaves (himself)']

See WIERZBICKA 1996: 415 for a universal semantic characterization of Direct Reflexive.

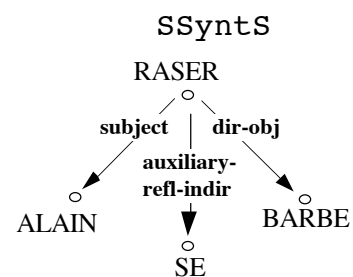
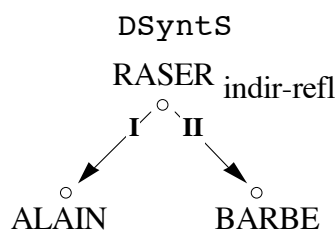
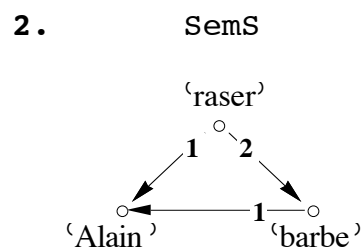
1. Indirect Reflexive



DMorphS

ALAIN SE_{dat} DIRE_{ind, pres, 3, sg} QUE ...

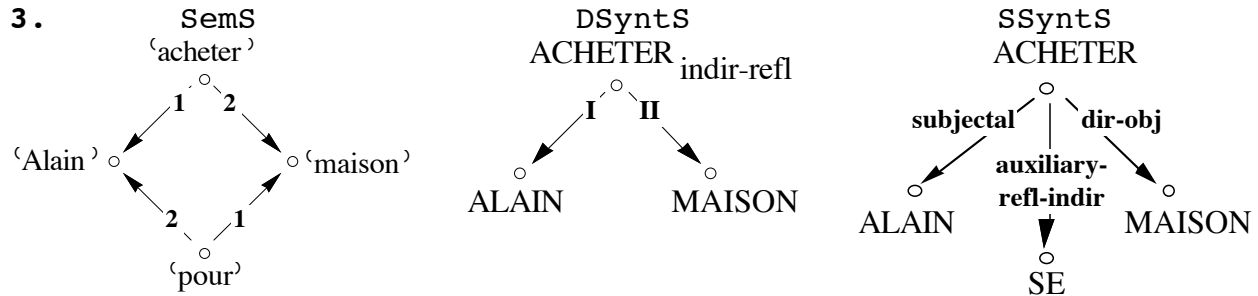
[= *Alain se dit que ...*, lit. 'Alain says to-himself that ...']



DMorphS

ALAIN SE_{dat} RASER_{ind, pres, 3, sg} LE_{fem, sg} BARBE

[= *Alain se rase la barbe*, lit. 'Alain shaves himself the beard']



DMorphS

ALAIN SE_{dat} ACHETER_{ind, pres, 3, sg} UN_{fem, sg} MAISON_{sg}

[= *Alain s'achète une maison*, lit. 'Alain buys himself a house']

No French verb distinguishes all the six voices: thus, a transitive verb cannot have the full demotional passive, while an intransitive verb cannot have the full promotional passive. This is allowed by the definition of inflectional category (MEL'ČUK 1993b: 263): it foresees the existence, on the one hand, of defective paradigms and on the other, of partial grammemes (*idem*, p. 269), which are applicable only to *SOME* lexemes of a given lexemic class. (Cf. partial cases—the partitive and the locative—in Russian: they are possible only with different nouns, and only some nouns have them.)

5. Linguistic Comments

5.1 . Voice as a Deep-Syntactic Inflectional Category

Interestingly, the inflectional category of voice in French is a Deep-Syntactic category in the following sense:

|| In French, the grammemes of voice appear only in the DSyntS; they do not appear in the Surface-Syntactic Structure (and of course not in the DMorphS).

This happens because voice in French has only analytical (= non-morphological) expression.⁸ (A similar situation is observed concerning the category of determination in French: it is also a DSynt-category, because its exponents are only analytical—the articles.)

The markers of particular voices appear of course both in the SSyntS and DMorphS. They are as follows:

	Surface-Syntactic Structure	Deep-Morphological Structure
Active	Zero	Zero
Full promotional passive	ETRE –auxiliary-pass→Vppart	ETRE Vppart
Agentless promotional passive	V–auxiliary-refl-dir→SE	V SE _{acc}
Partial demotional passive	ETRE–auxiliary-pass→Vppart	ETRE Vppart [+ IL _{impers}]
Direct reflexive	V–auxiliary-refl-dir→SE	V SE _{acc}
Indirect reflexive	V–auxiliary-refl-indir→SE	V SE _{dat}

Note that in the SSyntS, the lexeme SE depends on the lexical verb via different SSynt-Rels: auxiliary-reflexive-direct and auxiliary-reflexive-indirect. This is necessary in order to ensure that in the DMorphS, lexes of SE have different cases: the accusative *vs.* the dative. Different cases are, in their turn, required by rules for clitic cooccurrence and clitic ordering. Thus, a dative SE clitic precedes an accusative pronominal clitic, while an accusative SE does not cooccur with a dative pronominal clitic: *Elle se_{DAT} le prend* ‘She takes it to-herself’ *vs.* **Elle se_{ACC} lui donne* [correct expression: *Elle se donne à lui* ‘She gives herself to him’].

5.2. Full Promotional Passive

Full promotional passive in French calls for (at least) the following two comments.

- As is typical of intransitive verbs, the full promotional passive form readily admits Impersonalization:

(13)

- Active: *Nos représentants ont vendu des centaines d'ordinateurs*
‘Our representatives have sold hundreds of computers’.
- Full Promotional Passive: *Des centaines d'ordinateurs ont été vendus par nos représentants*
‘Hundreds of computers have been sold by our representatives’.
- Impersonalized Full Passive: *Il a été vendu des centaines d'ordinateurs par nos représentants,*
lit. ‘It has been sold hundreds of computers by our representatives’.

- As I said above, several intransitive verbs have the full demotional passive, but only in the impersonal construction, cf. (12).

For rich factual data on the passive in French, see GAATONE 1998.

5.3. Partial Passive

What is called here Partial (= Agentless) Passive is also known as Middle (RUWET 1972: 94), Habitual/Generic Reflexive (VET 1985: 55), Medio-Passive (MELIS 1990), and Pronominal Passive.

The main characteristic of this voice in French is that it is subject to the following two semantic constraints (examples are from RUWET 1972: 95-99):

- It can be used only in generic statements—without reference to a single specific event:⁹

(14) a. *Ces lunettes se nettoient facilement* 'These glasses clean easily'.

vs.

**Ces lunettes se sont nettoyées hier à 8h*

'These glasses have cleaned yesterday at 8 o'clock'.

b. *Ce livre se vend surtout aux bonnes sœurs* 'This book sells mainly to nuns'.

vs.

**Ce livre s'est vendu hier à une bonne sœur* 'This book has sold yesterday to a nun'.

- It is possible only with verbs whose DSyntA I is semantically an Agent ('does something'):

(15) a. *On doit adorer ce type de poème* 'This type of poem must be adored'.

vs.

?*Ce type de poème, ça s'adore,*

lit. 'This type of poem, this adores itself = This type of poem must be adored'.

vs.

Ce type de poème, ça ce récite,

lit. 'This type of poem, this recites itself = This type of poem must be recited'.

b. *Pierre m'a touché par sa prévenance* 'Peter moved me by his thoughtfulness'.

vs.

**Ces gens, ça se touche difficilement,*

lit. 'These people, this moves itself with-difficulty = These people are difficult to move'.

c. *Les autorités protègent la forêt* 'The authorities protect the forest'.

vs.

La forêt, ça se protège,

lit. 'The forest, this protects itself' = 'The forest must be protected'.

There is an obvious syntactic constraint: the SE-passive cannot have an agentive complement (PAR + NP); that is why it is partial.

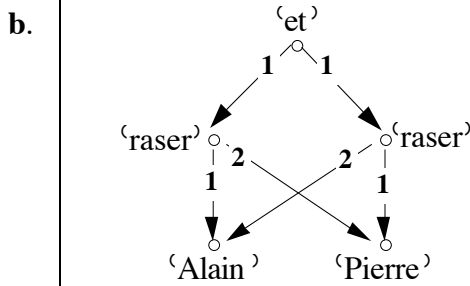
For a detailed description of the partial passive in French, see ZRIBI-HERTZ 1982; a comparison between the full promotional and the partial passives, as well as that between the French 'reflexive' passive and the similar passives in other Romance languages is offered in LAMIROY 1993.

5.4. The Reciprocal

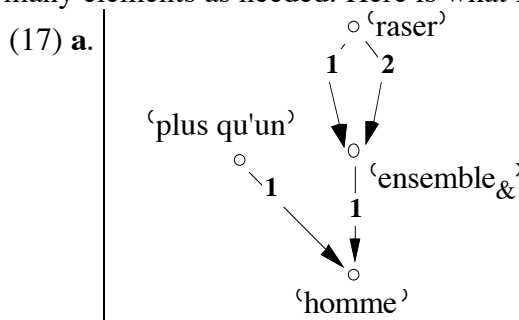
A form like *se raser* can have not only a 'genuinely' reflexive reading, but also a reciprocal one, i.e., it can signify 'each other' ≈ 'reciprocally':

(16) a. *Alain et Jean se rasent (l'un l'autre)* 'Alain and Jean shave each other'.

Such a sentence must have a different semantic source, for instance, something like this:



Note, however, that this simple Semantic Structure will not work: what would we do if, instead of two 'reciprocal' agents, we had a hundred, or some indefinite number ('Les hommes se rasent = Men shave each other')? We have to have recourse to the concept of 'set', namely 'set&', or a conjunction of as many elements as needed. Here is what I suggest as a SemS for the sentence (17b):



b. *Les hommes se rasent* 'The men shave themselves and/or each other'.

This Sem-structure is sufficient to represent a reciprocal activity of any number of entities. But two further problems arise immediately:

First, this is more than simply modifying the lexicographic diathesis of RASER only: we see here a semantic 'addition' that affects the propositional meaning of the verb, so that under such a representation, the reciprocal should not be considered a voice.

Second, the same SemS represents the reflexive meaning as well—it is inherently vague.

However, fortunately, the situation in French argues for the proposed representation: the meaning of the reciprocal is available for any reflexive form without exception, provided of course the semantic context allows for it (there is a plurality of agents, even if grammatically the subject is singular: *Ce couple s'aime*, lit. 'This couple loves itself', *On se bouscule*, lit. 'People shoves itself': GAATONE 1975: 214). Sentences of type (17b) are structurally ALWAYS three-way vague: (16b) can mean that each man shaves himself, that each man shaves someone else and is shaved by someone else or that some men shave themselves, while some others shave each other. Cf. (17c):

c. *On se tape dans le dos et sur les cuisses — dans le dos mutuellement, sur les cuisses chacun pour soi*, lit. 'People slap themselves on the back and on the thighs—on the back mutually and on the thighs each one for himself'.

Therefore, the SemS for the reflexive and the reciprocal must be the same and vague enough to cover all cases. Thus, reciprocal does not constitute in French a separate grammatical unit, but is, so

to speak, a variety of reflexive. (This conclusion was arrived at in MELIS 1990: 67.) And since the reflexive is a voice, we have to accept that the reciprocal is also a voice in French—not a special voice, but one of possible reading of the reflexive voice forms.¹⁰ This is a case where a specific voice of a particular language (here, the French reflexive) 'deviates' from the ideal universal scheme of grammatical categories, in which the reciprocal different from the reflexive is not a voice.

5.5. The Indirect Reflexive

Example 1 of the indirect reflexive poses no problem: here, the grammeme of voice marks referential identification of the Semantic Actants **1** and **3** of the verb. However, Examples 2 and 3 are not straightforward: the voice grammeme marks referential identification of the SemA **1** of the verb with an entity that is not its SemA. In Example 2, this entity is the Possessor of the beard, in Example 3, the Beneficiary of the purchase. Therefore, strictly speaking, Examples 2 and 3 are not covered by the general definition of voice.

However, formally, the behavior of the forms in question is identical to that of the forms of the direct reflexive (with the exception of Impersonalization: indirect reflexive verbs are transitive, and a transitive verb cannot be used in the impersonal construction). More importantly, SE is a marker of voice—as shown above, it cannot be considered to be an autonomous element of the sentence, i.e. an Object. As a result, we have no choice: we have to accept the indirect reflexive as a voice of French, while indicating its 'unruly' character. This is another case of a concrete voice that exceeds the strict limits of the ideal voice scheme.

Two final remarks seem to be in order:

1) An interesting case of indirect reflexive in French—of the type *Alain se trouve du charme*, lit. 'Alain finds some charm to himself', *Je me reconnais des responsabilités*, lit. 'I recognize some responsibilities to myself', etc.—is presented in GAATONE 1975: 207-208.

2) Indirect reflexive in French is possible for all verbs that have a Surface Indirect Object (cliticizable via LUI), given the semantic appropriateness of the referential identification of the DSynt-Actants **I** and **III**.

5.6. 'Reflexiva Tantum'

In the French grammar, it is usual to speak about 'inherent,' or 'intrinsic,' pronominal verbs in cases where the verb does not exist without SE: SE MOQUER '[to] mock', S'ÉVANOUIR '[to] faint', SE REPENTIR '[to] repent', SE TAIRE '[to] keep silent'. However, I would like to introduce a more general term to refer to all verbs in which SE is, so to speak, a part of their lexical identity. I mean four major classes of verbs:

- Such verbs as SE MOQUER '[to] mock', for which the verb without SE does not exist (*MOQUER).
- Such verbs as SE TROUVER '[to] be [somewhere]' (TROUVER '[to] find'), SE DOUTER '[to] suspect' (DOUTER '[to] doubt') or SE RENDRE '[to] go [somewhere]' (RENDRE '[to] give back'),

where the verb without SE formally exists, but has no regular semantic link with the corresponding SE verb.

- The verbs of the type SE DISPERSER ‘[to] disperse [intrans.]’ (DISPERSER ‘[to] disperse [trans.]’), SE BRISER ‘[to] break [intrans.]’ (BRISER ‘[to] break [trans.]’), SE LEVER ‘[to] get up’ (LEVER ‘[to] lift’), etc., which show a few more or less regular semantic relations with the corresponding verb without SE. (These verbs are also known as ‘subjective’ pronominal verbs, because their semantics is dominated by ‘a special involvement of the subject in process;’ see, e.g., ZRIBIHERTZ 1987: 24-26.) No matter how regular the semantic relation in these pairs might seem, it is obvious that it does not represent an inflectional meaning and that consequently the members of such pairs are different lexemes.¹¹

- The verbs of the type SE GONFLER ‘[to] inflate [intrans.]’ (GONFLER ‘[to] inflate [intrans.]’), SE CASSER ‘[to] break [intrans.]’ (CASSER ‘[to] break [intrans.]’), etc., where the pronominal and non-pronominal verb have the same meaning, SE being, so to speak, pleonastic.

All of these verbs will be called ‘lexical reflexives,’ because here a reflexive verb is not an inflectional form of the underlying verb, but a different lexeme, so that both verbs—with and without SE—must have different lexical entries.

Lexical reflexives correspond to what is called in Latin *verba deponentia*: verbs that exist only in the passive form, but have the semantics and syntax of active verbs (like *hortor* ‘[to] incite, convince somebody’ or *lūdificor* ‘[to] dodge something’). In French, it seems better to describe them as *reflexiva tantum*. Thus, the verb of the type of SE REMPLIR ‘[to] fill up [intrans.]’ appears in the lexicon, i.e., at the DSynt-level, as follows: REMPLIR(**refl-dir!**); correspondingly, S’ÉCRIRE ‘[to] write to each other’ is ÉCRIRE(**refl-indir!**). The indication in the subscript—part of the verb’s syntactics — specifies that these verbs are direct, resp., indirect, *reflexiva tantum*.

Let it be emphasized that French *reflexiva tantum* verbs include only verbs with the CLITIC SE. Verbal expressions that contain as a component a non-clitic reflexive pronoun SOI ‘oneself’ are not reflexive voice forms and are not considered in this paper: thus, REVENIR À SOI ‘[to] come to’, PRENDRE SUR SOI [de Vinf] ‘[to] take it upon oneself [to Vinf]’, RESTER CHEZ SOI ‘[to] stay home’, etc. are not *reflexiva tantum*.

Since French *reflexiva tantum* are by definition separate lexemes rather than forms of some other lexemes, the present paper does not deal with them at all. This should not be construed as a declaration to the effect that there are no important regularities to be stated in this domain. On the contrary, there is a rather regular subclass: decausatives of the type CARAMÉLISER ‘[to] cause to become caramelized’ ~ SE CARAMÉLISER ‘[to] become caramelized’ or OUVRIR ‘[to] cause to become open’ ~ S’OUVRIR ‘[to] become open’; cf. a classical analysis of these verbs in RUWET 1972: 87-125 under the name of ‘neuter verbs;’ later VET (1985), dubbed them ‘goal-oriented

reflexives.' ZRIBI-HERTZ (1987), who calls them 'reflexive ergative verbs' (because they denote events rather than actions), points out that they can be derived in 1,700 cases for 5,400 French transitive verbs—over 30%, thus making obvious the importance of their separate study and description. However, the relation of the type CARAMÉLISER ~ SE CARAMÉLISER does not represent a voice, since the pair manifests a clear semantic difference: 'cause'; therefore, it is irrelevant to this paper. (SE CARAMÉLISER is a derivational formation—a decausative—with respect to CARAMÉLISER.)

5.7. Two More Candidates for Voices

In addition to the six 'canonical' voices listed above, French has two constructions that can claim the status of voices: SE FAIRE + Vinf and SE VOIR + Vinf; here are examples:

(19) a. *Jean s'est fait voler*, lit. 'J. has made himself to-rob' = 'J. got robbed'.

b. *L'agent du passif s'est vu attribuer le trait "+agentif"*,

lit. 'The agent of the passive has seen itself to-attribute the feature '+agentive' =

'The agent of the passive has been attributed the feature '+agentive'.

These constructions are fully grammaticized—to the same degree that the compound tenses of the type *Je vais lire* 'I am going to read' and *Je viens de lire* 'I just read'. They are regularly used when an Indirect Object has to be put in the Subject position, which is not allowed by 'normal' promotional passive, as in (18), with the verbs VOLER [Y à Z] and ATTRIBUER [Y à Z]; they are no less regularly used in competition with the promotional passive: *Alain s'est fait arrêter* 'A. got arrested' ~ *Alain a été arrêté* 'A. was arrested'. However, the two constructions are severely constrained, both semantically and syntactically—a lot much more than 'normal' voices. On the other hand, they entail subtle semantic differences that I am unable to formulate precisely. Thus, the SE FAIRE + Vinf construction implies some responsibility on the part of the Subject, similarly to what we have in the English GET passive, and presupposes an 'adverse,' or 'negative,' effect on him (**Les récoltes se sont fait détruire par la grêle*, lit. 'The crops have made themselves destroy by hail' and ?*Le ministre s'est fait bien accueillir par la population*, lit. 'The minister has made himself receive well by the population'; cf. GAATONE 1983: 163-170). For this reason, I do not dare to declare these constructions to be additional voices, i.e., a part of the inflection of the French verb at the same level as other passives and the reflexives. (Cf. SIEWERSKA 1984: 126-139 on such constructions, which she calls 'paraphrastic passives,' in different languages, and GAATONE 1998: 30-31 on the SE VOIR + Vinf construction.)

6. Instead of a Conclusion

In today's linguistics, the main drive in the domain of voices consists in looking for the semantic 'unity' of all voices or at least of all the pronominal verbs and their relationship with the passive, etc. Numerous books and articles on the middle voice, on reflexives, on passives are dedicated to this

task. The motivation of this paper, as stated at the beginning, is completely different: simply to offer a list of grammatical voices of French, which has been done. At the same time, many problems directly related to the description of voices have been left out: passivizability of a verb *vs.* passivizability of a clause, the use of the agentive phrase with PAR, voice in set expressions (for all this, see GAATONE 1998), voice distinctions in non-finite forms (in infinitives, participles, nouns), voice and aspect, etc.

Acknowledgments

The first sketch of the present paper has been read and criticized by L. Iordanskaja, which led to a substantial reworking of the manuscript. Y.-Ch. Morin and E. Savvina detected a number of inconsistencies in the subsequent version; their suggestions largely contributed to the improvement of the presentation. The prefinal text underwent the scrutiny of D. Beck, D. Gaatone, L. Iordanskaja, S. Kahane, F. Lareau, A. Polguère, and S. Vandaele. I take the occasion to express my deepest gratitude to all of these people for their generous help.

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| moyen | |
| passif | |
| réfléchi | |

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ADDITIONS:

- 1) To develop better SE ≠ MOI, TOI, ... It is too complicated **not** to include **me**, **te**, etc. into SE.
Unique properties of SE.
- 2) Jean-Pierre Koenig & Eric Pederson 1992 Semantic Unity and Constructional Particularity: The French *se faire* Construction. *BLS-18*, 143-156.
- 3) SE FAIRE tuer: SCOLIA 10, 1997 P23R454
- 4) exemple: *L'historien Roubaud s'écoutait sans ennui*.

Notes

¹ Thus, GAATONE 1998: 27 supplies a clear definition of the passive in French, but this definition is not formulated as applicable to other (let alone all) languages— within the framework of a UNIVERSAL calculus of grammatical voices.

² I take it for granted that the BASIC (= underlying, lexicographic, or citation) FORM of every lexical unit L of a language can always be established beyond reasonable doubt, so that we can easily determine the basic diathesis of L.

³ The verbs RASER/SE RASER have also another meaning: '[to] bore stiff/[to] be bored stiff'; in what follows this homophony is ignored.

⁴ For many speakers, the expressions **Je rase moi et mon frère*, *?Je nous rase, moi et mon frère* are far from totally ungrammatical. This is explained by subconscious shift from the reflexive SE RASER to the transitive RASER, cf. *Je nous ai <*suis> rasé, moi et mon frère*.

⁵ I prefer not to illustrate this case with the wordforms **me**, since for some speakers, the sentences of the type *?*Marie me fait me raser* etc. are dubious or outright ungrammatical.

⁶ Of course, a verb in the INDIRECT reflexive, which keeps its DirO, cannot be used in the impersonal construction, see below.

@@ Note, however, *Il a déjà été fait mention de la construction du nombre entier*.

⁷ This opinion is by no means shared by all researchers. Cf., e.g.: "essential characteristic of this [= pronominal verbal—IM.] construction lies in the co-referentiality manifested between the subject NP and the CLITIC VERBAL COMPLEMENT" (BURSTON 1979: 147; emphasis added—IM.), "pronominal construction embodies essentially one type of clitic verbal complement—AN OBJECT PRONOUN" (*idem*: 150); "in quite a few so-called intransitives the OBJECT FUNCTION OF SE is reasonably transparent [*Elle a besoin de se reposer*]" (*idem*: 160). In the same way, LE GOFFIC 1993: 309ff. treats all forms of SE under the heading of 'Clitic Complements.' However, in most cases, it is believed that, for instance, in SE RASER, the clitic SE is a DirO and, at the same time, that SE RASER is a form of the reflexive voice. This is a contradictory viewpoint, which is logically impossible. On the other hand, cf. Wehrli (1986 : 283), who says that 'the process of reflexivization in Romance ... appears to be closer to an affixation process,' meaning affixation that signals 'a modification of the argument structure associated with a predicate (p. 274);' or WIERZBICKA 1996: 402ff., who demonstrates that the Polish reflexive pronoun SIĘ, syntactically similar to the French SE, is not an element of the sentence, i.e. not a Noun Phrase in the role of an object.

⁸ A status of so-called 'passive participle' is an open question (D. Gaatone drew my attention to this complication). If *écrit(e)* 'written' is described as a passive participle opposed to *écrivant(e)* 'writing', an active participle, then the grammemes of active and passive will be present in the SSyntS and the DMorphS. However, I am not sure that this is the best solution available. Maybe the participles of *écrit(e)* type are better described as 'PAST participles,' given that they are possible for all verbs, including all the intransitives?

⁹ In point of fact, the partial passive can also be used to denote a 'non-concrete' process or in the impersonal construction. Cf. the following examples (from ZRIBI-HERTZ 1982: 340, 357):

(i) 1. *Ce roman se lira partout au monde*, lit. 'This novel will read itself everywhere in the world'.

2. *La question se traite actuellement à l'Assemblée*,
lit. 'This question treats itself at present in the Parliament'.

3. *Il s'est recyclé 300 tonnes de papier cette année*,
lit. 'It has recycled itself 300 tons of paper this year'.

¹⁰ The meanings 'chacun soi-même' [= 'each himself'] or 'l'un l'autre' •'mutuellement'® [= 'one another' •'mutually'®] can be added to the SemS of (16a) to disambiguate between the genuine reflexive and the reciprocal; they must be attached to the node labeled 'set&', and they act as operators. For the behavior of the expression L'UN L'AUTRE, see KAYNE 1977: 332ff.

¹¹ An interesting subclass of French pronominal verbs includes SE-verbs used in the construction SE V + *chez* N: *Elle s'habille chez Armani*, lit. 'She dresses herself at Armani's' = 'She buys her cloths at Armani's', *Elle se coiffe chez Georges*, lit. 'She does her hair herself at George's' or 'She buys her hats from George', etc. These verbs are of course not reflexive voice forms of 'normal' verbs HABILLER '[to] dress [oneself]' and COIFFER '[to] do the hair/[to] sell hats to ...' (cf. BOGUSŁAWSKI 1977). They are the reflexive forms of the causative verbs HABILLER and COIFFER as seen in the sentences *Elle habille sa fille chez Armani*, lit. 'She dresses her daughter at Armani's' and *Elle coiffe sa fille chez Georges*, lit. 'She does the hair of her daughter at George's'. (Thanks to S. Kahane, who pointed this fact out to me.)