

ARE THE IMPERSONALS IN SLOVENE EXISTENTIALS?

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In many languages there exist certain syntactic structures that have traditionally been assumed impersonal due to the lack of the audible 'human' subject, as illustrated in (1) for Slovene:

- (1) Avtomobil je vrglo iz ovinka.
Car_{acc-sg} is_{pres-3-sg} thrown_{ptcp-n-sg} out bend_{loc}
'The car was thrown out of the bend.'

Within Relational Grammar (Perlmutter 1978) and Government and Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981) Extended Projection Principle (EPP) was elaborated, stating that each sentence has a subject, phonetically overt or covert. The subject is a noun phrase (NP) that takes the TP specifier position due to the strong EPP feature on the T^0 . It is not necessarily for the subject to be nominative, because EPP is not connected directly to the nominative case assignment (Sigurðsson 1991). EPP can be satisfied either by the NP movement or expletive insertion. Now, given that every sentence has a subject and that there exist inaudible arguments, we should also be able to find the inaudible subject of the impersonals in (1).

Burzio (1986: 178—179) states that "*a verb which lacks an external argument fails to assign accusative case to the internal argument and a verb which fails to assign accusative case to the internal argument fails to θ -mark an external argument.*" Following his insight the presence of the accusative noun phrase in (1) casts doubt on the 'subject-less analysis' of the impersonal structures. Because no θ -role is assigned to the external argument their subject position is filled by an inaudible expletive. Some inaudible elements are already proposed in Generative Grammar and I will apply some relevant diagnostics to identify them. At the same time I will show that impersonals are a subtype of transitives, related to existential and weather structures:

- In transitive clauses anaphora is bound by the referential subject. Weather and impersonal structures containing anaphora are unacceptable;
- Transitive verb agrees with the subject while it takes a default form in weather and impersonal structures;
- Under the sentence negation, transitive and impersonal structures are sensitive to the genitive of negation, revealing the internal argument nature of their accusative noun phrase.

The subject of the non-agreeing weather structures is nonreferential inaudible element, expletive *pro_{EX}*, which cannot bind anaphoric expressions. Because in impersonal structures neither anaphoric expressions can be bound nor is there any subject-verb agreement, it is reasonable to conclude that the subject of impersonal structures is also an expletive *pro_{EX}*.

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