

ON THE CATEGORY OF IMPERSONALITY

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Impersonality is a universal and multi-dimensional category, which causes serious difficulties when trying to conduct a clear and exhaustive classification of various ways and forms of its expression.

Traditionally, the study of impersonal constructions was mainly limited to the establishment of impersonal verbs classification according to their semantics, and registration of use of impersonal *it* cases in English, as well as the study of the possibility of personal construction reversibility in the impersonal one and vice versa.

Impersonality was considered as a matter of style, not syntax. Impersonal *it* and impersonal verbs were traced back to their Latin prototypes; an attempt was made to explain the emerging of impersonal sentences. These studies certainly contributed to a better understanding of the category of impersonality, but did not reveal its specificity as of a syntactic category that found its expression in a certain structure [1].

The classification of impersonal sentences by their semantics, although it reflects the specific facts of the language, is incomplete, since it covers only one side of a much broader issue. The traditional syntactic theory that divides sentences into verbal and nominal ones does not reveal all the specifics of an impersonal sentence either, the impersonal sentences features remain in the background, and sometimes even out of the researcher's view.

Impersonality is a semantic-syntactic category based on the non-actant nature of the action of a certain type of sentence. In modern English we

understand an impersonal sentence as a two-part syntactic structure consisting of two components - the subject expressed lexically by the meaningless, communicative-non-loaded impersonal pronoun, and the predicate that conveys the main content of the utterance. In other words, English impersonal sentences are characterized by the presence of a special element necessary for filling the subject's place. When defining impersonal sentences, it is necessary to proceed from their syntactic binominality and semantic mononuclearity. In terms of such approach to impersonal sentences, it is possible to define them as sentences containing formal *it* in the position of the subject, semantic structure of the core of which does not comprise actants.

In modern English, impersonal sentences are mononuclear at the semantic level, since they do not have actant-agent, and binominal at the syntactic level: in English, as a rule, there is an impersonal subject *it*. The second mandatory element of an impersonal sentence in the English language is the predicate. From a semantic point of view, it expresses an agentless process. In the aspect of a form, such predicate can be, as in personal sentences, a simple verbal predicate or a compound nominal predicate (with an adjective or a noun). In the semantic structure of nuclear impersonal sentences, there are no actants; in impersonal sentences that belong to the periphery of the field of impersonality, actants may appear.

Impersonality can be viewed as a field phenomenon with a core and periphery. The analysed material makes it possible to distinguish between nuclear impersonal sentences characterized by a complete absence of actants, for example: *It snows. It's chilly*, and peripheral impersonal sentences in which the emerging of peculiar actants is observed. Actants in peripheral sentences can be expressed both implicitly and explicitly. Actants

of the impersonal sentences can be in some cases the agents of the action expressed by the verbal extension, in others, in addition to that, be the experiencer of the verb-predicate of impersonal sentences, that is the semantic object of its impact, and in the third cases be only the experiencer of the process expressed by a predicate of an impersonal sentence.

Impersonal sentences include not only semantically non-actant sentences, but also those in which actants may appear. Peripheral sentences are characterized by a special extension expressed by an infinitive, gerund, or subordinate clause. Being verb-like in content, they gravitate towards the end of the sentence. English sentences containing such extensions can vary their structure in two ways - they can have both a formal personal and impersonal structure. For example: *To read that is vital. It is vital to read that.*

It should be mentioned that the relation of any impersonal construction to its contextual environment is largely determined by the specifics of its form. This is why impersonality cannot be viewed unilaterally only from morphological or logical positions. The issue of an impersonal sentence in terms of its structural analysis is connected with complex scientific grammar problems, that is: parts of speech, members of the sentence, and morphology of the English verb.

1. Єгорова О. І., Кобякова І. К. Семантична ідентифікація та квантитативні параметри концепту QUANTITY в англійській мові [Текст] / І. К. Кобякова, О. І. Єгорова // Вісник ХНУ ім. В. Н. Каразіна. Серія “Романо-германська філологія.Методика викладання іноземних мов”, 2011. — №954. — С. 94—102

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