

Michael Brody

Another look at impersonals

Dedicated impersonal pronouns, impersonal interpretations of personal pronouns, and various phonologically unexpressed impersonals have many complex and puzzling features. These include (a) the fact that impersonals must always receive a +human interpretation, (b) that sentences with plural personal pronouns interpreted as universal (aka generic) impersonals must always include a locative or a restricted type of temporal phrase, (c) that of the personal pronouns only the second singular and the plurals can be interpreted as universal impersonals, and only the third plural is fully exclusive (does not potentially range over first or second person) and each of the others also have their idiosyncratic behavior with respect to exclusivity (d) that real ("evidence-based" as opposed to "corporate") existential impersonals (unlike universals), --both singular dedicated impersonal morphemes and plural personal pronouns interpreted impersonally--must always be either nonderived subjects or derived subjects of an atelic predicate, and they cannot bind anaphoric elements, and (e) that antecedentless PRO unlike pro in general must be interpreted impersonally as +human, and that in fact PRO cannot be a real (non-quasi) expletive even with an appropriate antecedent. I shall attempt to provide explanations of these properties.