

Personal/impersonal and subject/null subject phenomena in the multi-structural languages

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Abstract

The study examines the functional potential of impersonal pronouns in different languages. The aim of this study is to analyze personal/impersonal and subject/null subject phenomena in multi-structural languages. The novelty of the study is to establish the role of the pronoun in personal and impersonal aspects. To achieve the aim of the study, the following methods are used: lexico-grammatical analysis, structural analysis, contrast analysis, and interpretative analysis of artistic and lexicographic texts. The comparative research was based on Russian, English, German, and French lexicographic resources and examples from artistic discourse in Russian, English, German, and French with their translations. As a result of the study, it was revealed that the impersonal pronoun is a homonym for the personal pronoun of the 3rd person unit. In grammatical studies, the impersonal pronoun stands out as an independent category. A unit known in grammar as the 3rd person pronoun (in German *es*, in English *it*, in French *il*, *ce*) has a broader functional potential than other pronouns. Namely, it can act in the text not only as a substitute for another word but can also indicate syntactic structures of different complexity: from a word to a complex of propositions. The prospect is to study the discursive nature of impersonality in various types of discourse in different linguocultures.

Key words: Lexical and grammatical categories, personal/impersonal phenomena, subject / null subject phenomena, part of speech, pronouns, verbs, multi-structural languages, linguocultural contrastive aspect, artistic discourse

Introduction

The controversial nature of the group of words known as “pronouns” in linguistic literature is the cause of endless discussions.

On the one hand, the dispute raises the question of their status in the system of parts of speech, namely, in the classification of some linguists, they are recognized as an independent part of speech and belong to the block of full-fledged (auto-semantic) words, other linguists consider them to be function words, and others generally deny their part-of-speech status and “dissolve” this group of words in other parts of speech. On the other hand, the internal classification is no less contradictory, i.e., the number and nomenclature of lexical-grammatical categories of pronouns not only in different (even closely related) languages but also by different authors within the same language. See the literature review on this issue (Muryasov, 2019; 2021).

The aim of this study is to analyze personal/impersonal and subject/null subject phenomena in multi-structural languages. We try to distinguish the role of the pronoun in personal and impersonal aspects.

Literature Review

The analysis of the linguistic literature shows that the pronoun plays a significant role in multi-structural languages (Lamprecht, 1972; Referovskaia & Vassilieva, 1982; Schendels, 1988; Glinz, 1994; Alexander, 1995; Vater, 1995; Gak, 1999; Peshkovski, 2001; Vinogradov, 2001; Apresyan, 2004; Jespersen, 2006; Vasilyeva & Pitskova, 2016; Boeva-Omelechko et al., 2018; Gazizov et al., 2020; Muryasov, 2019; Muryasov, 2021; Muryasov, 2023, etc.). Some categories of pronouns are

distinguished in the studies of most authors, for example, personal, possessive, demonstrative, interrogative (or interrogative-relative).

At the same time, there are classifications in which some categories are absent completely. Such categories include the so-called impersonal pronouns. Some grammarians consider them as a kind of personal pronouns. This point of view is presented, for example, in studies on the German language (Helbig & Buscha, 1996; Duden, 2005). In other German grammars, this group of words is considered an independent category (Schendels, 1988).

The same obscurity regarding the status of the impersonal pronoun *it* and the impersonal construction *there* is observed in English. Some linguists completely reject impersonal pronouns.

As A. Lamprecht (1972) considers *it* in the section “personal pronouns”:

“Das unpersönliche *it*, das meist einem dt. “*es*” entspricht, ist keine eigentliche *s P r o n o m e n* (our interspace – authors), d.h., es steht nicht stellvertretend für ein Substantiv..., ist ein typisches Konstruktionswort bei der Satzbildung” (Lamprecht, 1972).

At the same time, the author calls *it* an impersonal subject (unpersönliches Subjekt) (Lamprecht, 1972).

We should also point out that in this regard, two groups of languages can be distinguished: languages in which the concept of “impersonal pronoun” is completely absent, for example, Latin, Russian and Turkic languages; languages in which the term “impersonal pronoun” is widely used in one interpretation or another, for example, English (*it, there is*), German (*es*), French (*il*).

We find a contradictory explanation in English in the study of L.S. Barkhudarov and D.A. Steling (1973) *it* is a personal pronoun, but if it expresses situations “at a certain time or in a certain place”, it is defined as an impersonal pronoun.

In many grammars of the English language, the impersonal pronoun is not presented as an independent category.

In the grammar of English-speaking authors, there are some peculiarities of the allocation of personal pronouns: *I, you, he, she, it, one* in the singular and *we, you, they* in the plural (Alexander, 1995; LGSWE, 2000).

It is illogical to define *one* as a personal pronoun.

The author also writes: “*One*, used as an indefinite pronoun meaning “everyone/anyone” (Weudel, 1994).

Methodology

In our research we use the following methods: lexico-grammatical analysis, structural analysis, contrast analysis, interpretative analysis of artistic and lexicographic texts.

The comparative research was based on Russian, English, German, and French lexicographic sources (WEUDEL, 1994; LGSWE, 2000; LDCE, 2003; MED, 2006; CFRD, 2004; ODD, 2008; ORD, 2000; RHLDAE, 2022; BTSRY, 2008; CRGD, 2000; Duden, 2005; Ushakov, 1996, etc.) and artistic discourse in Russian, English, German, and French.

Pronouns in artistic discourse were considered first on the examples of M. Bulgakov’s (2015) work “Master and Margarita”, of M. Sholokhov’s (1976) work “Podnyataya tselina” and translations of these works into English, German, and French, on examples of J.W. Goethe’s (2023) work “Erlkönig” and translations of this work into English, French and Russian.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of linguistic literature shows a wide functional spectrum of the so-called impersonal pronoun.

Thus, we conclude that the pronoun *es* in German, *it* in English and *il* in French

perform the functions of a personal pronoun of the 3rd person singular as a substitute for a noun or a situation mentioned in the text. Another function of this unit is demonstrative, further as a formal grammatical subject (empty subject) or object (empty object), and, finally, as a correlate.

It is not fortuitous that when translating a phrase with an impersonal pronoun from one language into another, a demonstrative pronoun is often used instead of the impersonal equivalent, cf.:

Russian: *Tramvai nakryl Berlioza, i pod reshvyotku Patriarshey allei vybrosilo na bul'zhnyi otkos krugliy tyomnyi predmet. Skativshis' s etogo otkosa, on zaprygal po bul'zhnikam Bronnoy.*

Eto byla otrezannaya golova Berlyoza (Bulgakov, 2015).

English: *Berlioz vanished from sight under the tramcar and a round, dark object rolled across the cobbles, over the kerbstone and bounced along the pavement.*

It was a severed head (Bulgakov, 1967).

German: *Die Straßenbahn überrollte Berlioz, unterm Gitter der Patriarchenallee hervor sprang ein dunkler runder Gegenstand die gepflasterte Böschung hinauf, rollte wieder herab und hüpfte über den Fahrdamm.*

Es war der abgetrennte Kopf von Berlioz (Bulgakov, 1983).

French: *Le tramway recouvrit Berlioz et; sur les pavés, qui montaient vers la grille de l'allée, fut projeté un objet rond et de couleur sombre. L'objet heurta la grille, sauta sur le pavé puis roula jusqu'au milieu de la chaussée, où il s'arrêta.*

C'était la tête coupée de Berlioz (Bulgakov, 1968).

Also cf.:

German: *Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind*

Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind (Goethe, 2023),

English: *Who rides so late through the wind and night?*

It's a father with his child so light... (Goethe, 1983),

French: *Qui roule si tard dans la nuit et le vent?*

C'est le père avec son enfant... (Goethe, 2011),

Russian: *Kto pozdnyy verkhoviy pod vetrom nochnym?*

To yedet otets s malyutkoi svoim (Goethe, 2022).

The main area of syntactic juncture of impersonal pronouns in English, German and French is their use as a formal grammatical subject in combination with verbs or adverbial predicatives denoting natural phenomena.

See Table 1.

Table 1. Impersonal structures, denoting natural phenomena

Russian	English	German	French
Morozit.	It freezes, it is freezing.	Es friert.	Il gèle.
Kholodaet.	it is beginning to grow cold, the cold weather is setting in.	Es wird kalt.	Il commence à faire froid.
Idyot dozhd'.	It's raining.	Es regnet.	Il pleut.
Idyot sneg.	It's snowing.	Es schneit.	Il neige.
Idyot grad.	It is hailing.	Es hagelt.	Il grêle.
Podmorazhivaet.	it is freezing.	Es friert.	Il gèle.
Tayet.	It's thawing.	Es taut.	Il dégèle.
Grom gremit.	It thunders, it is thundering	Es donnert.	Il tonne.

Vetreno.	It's windy.	Es windet.	Il vente.
Shtormit.	There's a gale blowing, it's blowing a gale.	Es stürmt.	Le vent soufflé on tempête, la tempête fait. rage.
Idyot melkiy grad.	There is soft hail falling.	Es graupelt.	Il y a du grésil
Sverkaet molnya.	There is thunder and lightning.	Es blitzt.	Il y a des éclairs.
Sverkaet zarnitsa.	There is summer lightning.	Es wetterleuchtet.	–
Tuman.	It is foggy, it is misty.	Es nebelt.	Le temps est humide et brumeux.
Dozhd' lyot kak iz vedra.	Ppouring, it's raining cats and dogs.	Es gießt.	Il tombe des cordes, il pleut comme vache qui pisse.
Nakrapyyaet.	It is drizzling, it is spitting with rain.	Es tröpfelt.	Il tombe des gouttes.
Skvozit.	There is a draught here.	Es zieht.	Il y a un courant d'air.

Impersonal pronouns can be considered an independent category for several reasons. First, in functional terms, they are completely isolated from homonymous pronouns of the 3rd person singular, i.e., they are not related to any units in the text. Secondly, they are deprived of a syntactic function in the sentence and play the role of a pseudo-subject or a pseudo-object. Thirdly, and this is perhaps the most important, they are amorphous in contrast to the homonymous personal pronouns of the 3rd person singular, i.e. devoid of morphological paradigmatics.

Personal pronouns of the 3rd person are opposed in some languages on a gender basis:

Russian: *on/ona/ono*,
 English: *he/she/it*,
 German: *er / sie / es*,
 French: *il / elle*.

Impersonal pronouns are devoid of a gender attribute. In addition, personal pronouns have nominative and oblique forms:

English: *he – him, she – her, it – its*,
 German: *es – seiner – ihm – es*,
 French: *il, elle – le, la (direct object) and lui (indirect object)*.

Impersonal pronouns do not have a form of a case category.

The personal pronouns of the 3rd person form the grammatical opposition singular: plural:

English: *he / she / it: they*,
 German: *er / sie / es: sie*,
 French: *il / elle: ils / elles*.

The predicate of constructions with impersonal pronouns agrees in number with the semantic subject, cf.:

Russian: *zhelayushikh ne nakhodilos'* (Shvedova, 1980),
German: *Es fanden sich keine Interessenten* (Duden, 2005),
Es erschienen nur etwa dreißig Zuschauer (Duden, 2005),
French: *Il ne trouv  pas de candidats...* (Riegel, Pellat & Rioul, 2014).

In other words, the impersonal pronoun in such structures is a defective subject also syntactically since it does not agree in number with the predicate.

There is a certain parallelism between subject / null-subject parameters as an attribute of a sentence and personal/impersonal parameters of verbal action in the sense that both the first and the second phenomena are characterized by a field structure.

These two phenomena are closely related.

The core of the syntax is formed by sentences having the structure "subject-predicate".

However, the degree of obligatoriness of these two components is not the same even within the framework of the Indo-European languages.

For the Germanic languages, binomiality (subject–predicate) is more typical than for the Russian language.

The well-known Russian Germanist V.G. Admoni (1986) wrote: "Der deutsche Satz im Deutschen wird also dadurch charakterisiert, da  er zweigliedrig, nominativisch und verbal ist" (Admoni, 1986: 228).

In relation to the subject, from a grammatical point of view, four types of verbs should be distinguished.

Verbs with full conjugation paradigm.

Paradigm-defective verbs that only combine with certain subjects.

They do not have the forms of the 1st and 2nd person singular and plural and are used only in the form of the 3rd person, for example,

faunonymous verbs, i.e., verbs expressing different forms of activity of representatives of the animal world:

Russian: *layat, myaukat', bleyat', zhuzhat', strkotat', etc.*,

English: *(to) chirp, etc.*,

German: *schilpen / tschilpen, zirpen, surren, etc.*,

French: *peppier, gazouiller, bourdonner, etc.*

as well as verbs denoting the immanent properties of inanimate objects, including the properties of representatives of the plant kingdom:

Russian: *techyot (river)*,

English: *(to) flow, flower*,

German: *flie en, bl hen, br ckeln, vereisen*,

French: *couler, fleurir, se givrer, etc.*

Personal verbs that have an impersonal lexical-semantic variant in their semantic structure:

Russian: *vykhodit' / vyiti: vyshlo sovsem ne tak, kak my ozhidali; zvonok, zvonyat*,

English: *She rang once, twice*,

German: *Sie l utete einmal, noch einmal – Es l utete*,

French: *Elle sonne une fois, plus une deuxieme – Il sonne*.

Impersonal verbs proper in English, German and French, which are always used with the impersonal pronoun that is a pseudo-subject, empty subject in English (Alexander,

1995; LGSWE, 2000), Platzhalter in German (Helbig & Buscha, 1996; Duden, 2005). In Russian, they often correspond to one-member sentences consisting of a predicate in the 3rd person singular, cf.:

Russian: *morozit*,
English: *it is freezing*,
German: *es friert*,
French: *il gèle*,

Russian: *vechereyet*,
English: *it is getting dark*,
German: *dämmert / es wird Abend*,
French: *il commence à faire jour / il commence à faire nuit, etc.*

This symmetry of impersonal structures is not typical for all groups of verbs. It is more typical for English, German, and French, and less typical for the Russian language, in which a noun is often used as a subject, denoting a certain natural phenomenon, cf.:

Russian: *idiot dozhd' / sneg, grom gremit*,
English: *it is raining, it is snowing, it thunders / it is thundering*,
German: *es regnet, es hagelt, es schneit, es donnert*,
French: *il pleut, il neige, il grêle, il tonne*.

The semantic feature of impersonal structures lies in the fact that, for example, in the Russian language, according to A.M. Peshkovsky, they express “the external world in relation to the speaker and the listener the world, which is a third person for him” (Peshkovski, 2001).

According to V.M. Pavlov (1984), an impersonal pronoun is a “projection onto something in the external environment”.

Describing German structures with an impersonal subject, V.M. Pavlov (1984) notes that they contain a semantic subject in the form of oblique cases, experiencing a certain emotional state: *Es gruselt ihn (ihm)* “He is scared”.

We find an accurate description of impersonal verbs in German in the work of O. Behaghel (1923): “In einem Teil der Fälle galt in seiner im Hintergrund stehend gedachter Größe, die unter Umständen a l s e t w a s Ü b e r n a t ü r l i c h e s (something supernatural), a l s e t w a s U n h e i m l i c h e s (something sinister, disturbing) (our interspace – authors) erscheint (Behaghel, 1923): *es graut mir (this terrifies me)*, *es gruselt mir (I'm scared)*, *es spukt (this place is haunted, there are evil spirits)*, etc.

The Russian language is characterized by an abundance of verbal one-member sentences. This occurs in sentences in which predicates are expressed by finite verbs due to the widely branched verbal paradigmatics. The personal endings of the verb provide the subjective reference of the action, cf.:

Russian: *Chem zanymaeshsya? – chitayu / smotryu televizor / pishu pis'mo roditelyam etc.*

Grammatically null-subject structures are impossible in Germanic and Romance languages, cf.:

English: *What are you doing? I am reading a book / I am writing a letter to my*

parents / I am watching television,

German: *Was machst du? – Ich lese / Ich sehe fern / Ich schreibe einen Brief an meine Eltern,*

French: *Je lis / Je regarde la télévision / J'écris la lettre à mes parents.*

In English, German and French, the verbal predicate does not tolerate grammatical null-subject phenomenon, i.e., a sentence, as a rule, consists of two structural elements: the subject and the predicate. Another thing is the so-called nominative sentences, consisting of some substantives or substantive phrases. They are very frequent in Russian. As a rule, the action of any sentence corresponds to a certain time plane, even if the action is not expressed by the tense form of the verb, which is especially typical for the Russian language. The temporal localization of an action is determined by the context, cf.:

Russian: *... Morozniy den'. Konets dekabrya. Gremyachiy log. Kureni, sarai, pletni, derevya v beloy opushi ineya. Za dal'nim bugrom boi* (Sholokhov, 1976).

English: *...A frosty day. The end of December. Gremyachy Log. Houses, barns, fences, trees rimed with frost. Fighting beyond a distant hill* (Sholokhov, 1979).

German: *...Ein frostiger Tag. Ende Dezember. Gremjatschi Log. Häuser, Scheunen, Zäune, Bäume, alles mit flaumigem Reif verbrämt. Hinter den fernen Hügeln ist ein Gefecht im Gange* (Sholokhov, 1968).

French: *...Un jour de gel. Fin décembre. Grémiachi-Log. Les maisons, les hangars, les enclos, les arbres sont diamantes de givre. On se bat au loin, derrière hauteur des canous* (Sholokhov, 1937).

Thus, the comparison of genetically related and unrelated languages leads to the conclusion that the more drastically the members of the verb paradigm are opposed to each other in the inflectional paradigm, “the freer they are from the need to be accompanied by personal pronouns” (Muryasov, 2011: 41).

Structures with impersonal pronouns denoting the change of daytime and (rarely) of the year, as well as a specific time, can be singled out into a special group. Within this group, there is a possibility of variation of the subject, i.e., within the same language, both impersonal constructions and constructions with meaningful subjects can be used in parallel:

Russian: *svetaet, smerkaetsya, vechereet, rassvetaet, brezzhit (utro chut' brezshit), temneyet, etc.,*

English: *it is dawning / day is breaking, it is getting dark / night is drawing on / it is growing dark / night is falling, etc.,*

German: *es dämmeret, es dunkelt, es wird Abend / es geht auf den Abend (zu), es tagt, es nachtet, es herbstet / es herbstelt, etc.,*

French: *il commence à faire jour / le jour commence à poindre, il commence à faire nuit / la nuit tombe / le soir tombe, il commence à faire sombre, etc.*

Impersonal constructions are also often used to express a specific time, cf.:

Russian: *Vremya tri chasa,*

English: *It is three o'clock,*

German: *Es ist drei Uhr,*

French: *Il est trois heures.*

Impersonal constructions denote the mental and physiological state of a person. In this

group, interlingual asymmetry is sometimes observed, i.e. in one language an impersonal construction is used, and in another a construction with a meaningful subject:

Russian: *U menya pershit v gorle, yemu kholodno, nos cheshetsya, u menya moroz po kozhe, yego tryasyot, yemu strashno, u nego sadnit v gorle, yego toshnit, ya goloden etc.,*

English: *I have a tickling in my throat. It is cold. My nose itches. It makes me shiver. He is shivering with cold. He is terrified / afraid. His throat smarts. It makes him sick / it sickens (disgusts, nauseates) him, I am hungry, etc.,*

German: *Mir kratzt es im Hals. Es ist Kalt. Es juckt mir (mich) die Nase. Es überläuft mich kalt. Es schüttelt mich. Es schüttelt ihn. Es graust ihm (ihn) / Ihm (ihn) graust es. Es brennt ihm in Halse. Es ekelt ihn. Es hungert mich, etc.,*

French: *J'ai la gorge irritée. Il tombe la fièvre. Le nez me d'emange. Ça donne la chair de poule / Ça vous donne le frisson. Il a peur. Ça pique la gorge. Il a mal au cœur / Il a des nausées. Il a faim, etc.*

A number of impersonal constructions contain evaluative adverbial or substantive predicatives:

Russian: *Mne eto protivno. Eto ne goditsya. Sleduet. Nadlezhit. Kak podobaet. Eto ne prinyato (neprilichno). Eto mne vazhno. Pristalo. Stydno etc.*

English: *It is disgusting / repulsive / repugnant. It does not do (+ infin.). This / it is to be done / This / it must be done). As it becomes. It is not done (indecently). It is important. It becomes. It is a shame etc.*

German: *Es ekelt mich (mir) / Ich ekele mich davor. Es schickt sich nicht (+ Inf.). Es ist nötig. Es gehört sich. Wie es sich gehört. Es gehört sich nicht. Es ist wichtig. Es geziemt sich für ihn. Es ist eine Schande etc.*

French: *Il est repugnant de / Il est dégoûtant de / C'est dégoûtant. On n'agit pas de la sorte. Il faut / Il convient. importe. Ça ne se fait pas. Il m'en chaut. Il sied / Il lui sied... C'est honteux de (+ inf.) etc.*

Impersonal constructions with existential verbs express the presence or absence of something:

Russian: *byvaet, imeetsya, ne dostayot, sluchaetsya, (ne) khvataet, imeet mesto etc.,*

English: *It happens. There is (are). There is not enough. Be missing / be lacking, etc.,*

German: *Es kommt vor. Es gibt. Es fehlt an / Es mangelt an, etc.,*

French: *Il arrive que, faire défaut, etc.*

Also cf.:

Russian: *Byvayut sredi nokh magi... i ubiytsi, – govoril monotonno procurator, – a popadayutsya lguni ... (Bulgakov, 1992),*

English: *“Among them **there are** magicians... and murderers”, said the Procurator in a monotone... **There are** also liars (Bulgakov, 1996),*

German: *„Unter ihnen sind Magier... und Mörder“, sprach der Prokurator..., es sind auch Lügner unter ihnen (Bulgakov, 1983),*

French: *Parmi eux, **il y a** des meges... Et il y a a aussi des menteurs (Boulgakov, 1994).*

The impersonal pronoun is sometimes used as the beginning of the description of any events, which is especially typical for fairy tales. In such cases, one can speak of an

epic impersonal pronoun:

Russian: *Zhyl-był (zhyl da byl) korol'*,
English: *Once upon a time there was a king*,
German: *Es war einmal ein König...*,
French: *Il était une fois un roi*.

The grammatically redundant use of an impersonal pronoun in sentences in which the agent (semantic subject) is represented by a meaningful subject does not mean that the impersonal pronoun is devoid of any communicative function. Often the use of constructions with an impersonal pronoun is due to the need to emphasize the most significant component in a communicative sense, i.e., rhemes. Substantive predicatives usually function as a rheme.

In formal terms, the grammatical rank of the agent (semantic subject) is lowered and, vice versa, its communicative rank is increased.

O. Jespersen's (2006) position that *there* in the sentence *Once upon a time there was a tailor* (Odnazhdy zhyl-był portnoi) we hide the latter in the place that the subject usually occupies, putting it in a less important position (Jespersen, 2006: 408) refers to the formal (surface) structure, not its deep structure.

An impersonal pronoun in combination with a verb creates a tension field (Spannungsfeld), which the German linguist K. Boost (1955) wrote about. Further cf.:

Russian: *Prishlo (nastupilo) vremya, kogda...*,
English: **There was** a time when...,
German: *Es war die Zeit gekommen...*,
French: **Il** vient un moment où...

In such sentences, the grammatical and semantic subject is represented by a meaningful noun, and the impersonal pronoun cannot be considered as a grammatical subject and in grammatical studies, it qualifies as an empty subject (Alexander, 1995) in English, Platzhalter in German.

In the electronic version of the libretto based on V. Hugo's novel *Notre Dame de Paris*, the text begins with the sentence *Il est venu le temps des cathedrales* (*the time for cathedrales has come*).

Structures with an impersonal pronoun in different languages have several syntactic differences. Particularly dynamic is the place in the sentence of the impersonal pronoun *es* in German. Thus, a change in the order of words in a sentence causes the omission of the impersonal *es*, which is characteristic of the so-called impersonal passive:

Es wird im Nebenzimmer getanzt "There is dancing in the next room",
Im Nebenzimmer wird getanzt.

It is also true with *es* in structures that express the physiological or mental states of a person:

Es friert mich (I'm cold) and *Mich friert*.
Es durstet mich (I'm thirsty) and *Mich durstet*, etc.

In some structures, the impersonal *es* is an obligatory component, no matter where it is in the sentence:

Es scheint mir, daß... (It seems to me that...)

Mir scheint *es*, daß...
Es klingelte plötzlich (Suddenly the bell rang),
Plötzlich klingelte *es*.

The use of impersonal verbs and impersonal pronouns are interconnected. However, not all languages have an impersonal pronoun, while groups of impersonal verbs are present in them.

For example, in Latin and Russian, there is no impersonal pronoun, but there are classes of impersonal verbs.

As for the Russian language, we can point to the 3rd person pronoun of neuter gender “*ono*”, which in its functions resembles impersonal pronouns in Germanic and Romance languages.

The pronoun “*ono*” is used in very limited types of structures. It is characteristic, it refers to a situation, an event and has an abstract meaning.

So, according to the Dictionary of the Russian language by D. Ushakov (1996), the second meaning of the pronoun *ono* is defined as follows:

“the same as “this” ... *Puskai poet durachitsya, v osemnadsat' let ono prostitel'no* (Pushkin) (Ushakov, 1996: 807).

The author also writes that this unit is used “in the meaning of a particle in impersonal sentences as a h i n t at the s u b j e c t (our interspace – authors) (Ushakov, 1996: 807), cf.:

Russian: *Vot ono chto!*
German: *So ist es also!*

Russian: *Ono i lutsche,*
German *So ist es besser.*

Russian: *To-to i ono,*
German: *So ist es eben,*
English: *That is it,*
French: *Eh, Alors C'est comme ça!*

The Large Explanatory Dictionary of Russian Language also gives the demonstrative meanings of the pronominal noun *ono*, referring “to smth. previously named, mentioned, etc (BTSRY, 2008: 714):

Vy, budete eyo vstrechat'? – *Ne znayu, budet li ono khorosho*”.

Further, it is defined as “a particle (with an introductory word and in an i m p e r s o n a l (our interspace – authors) sentence” (BTSRY, 2008: 714):

Vot ono kak!

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn based on the analysis of the functional potential of impersonal pronouns in different languages.

1. The impersonal pronoun is a homonym of the personal pronoun of the 3rd person singular.
2. In grammatical studies, the impersonal pronoun should be singled out as an independent category.
3. The unit known in grammar as a 3rd person pronoun (German *es*, English *it*, French *il*, *ce*) has a wider functional potential than other pronouns. Namely, it can appear in

the text not only as a substitute for another word but can also indicate syntactic structures of various complexity – from a word to a complex of propositions.

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