

Generic subject in Polish impersonal constructions

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According to Holmberg (2005), there is a relation between general definite third person *pro* (a null nominative-case pronoun) and a generic *pro*, such that in consistent null subject languages, like Italian, the generic reading is never available for *pro*. Thus, it has to be expressed with an overt marker such as *si*. The analysis of Polish impersonal constructions suggests that Polish, a consistent *pro* drop language, does have a generic impersonal third person subject, contrary to Holmberg's assumption.

I examine the properties of subjects in two types of impersonal constructions, namely the SIE_z construction, and the -NO/-TO construction. They are illustrated by examples (1) and (2), respectively.

- (1) Budowało się domy.
built.3SG.NEUT REFL houses
'One has built houses.'
- (2) Budowano domy.
built.IMPERS houses
'One has built houses.'

The construction in (1) patterns like the cognate Italian *si*-construction in that the generic reading requires the presence of the overt marker *się*. In (2), the generic interpretation is still possible, despite there being no overt *się*, or any other subject marker present.

The analysis reveals that the interpretation is guided by aspect and specific time reference.

This study provides support for the claim by Sigurðsson and Egerland (2009) that monoparametric division into consistent and partial null-subject languages may not be feasible.

References

- Holmberg, A. (2005). Is there a little *pro*? Evidence from Finnish. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36: 533-564.
- Sigurðsson, H. A. & Egerland, V. (2009). Impersonal null-subjects in Icelandic and elsewhere. *Studia Linguistica* 63(1): 158-185.