

On Subject valency : A typological contrast between German, Japanese and some other languages

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On subject valency : A typological contrast between German, Japanese and some other languages⁽¹⁾

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1. Preliminary remarks

As is generally known, it is difficult to define the subject notion in a cross-linguistically valid fashion. This is a problem that will probably never be finally settled. Keenan (1976) lists over 30 subject criteria, which can be subdivided into three major groups : (i) coding properties, (ii) behavioural/control properties, and (iii) semantic properties. Coding properties include case markers and congruence (agreement); behaviour and control properties include reflexivization, equi-NP-deletion, raising etc ; criteria listed as semantic properties are semantic roles, typically associated with subjects as “agent”.

The important claim of Keenan’s “subjecthood” criteria is the following : The more of those criteria a possible subject meets, the more “subjecty” it is (cf. Wetzler’s 1992 terms “nouny” and “verby”). Therefore a subject continuum, extending from a prototypical subject to a peripheral one, should be assumed (cf. Comrie 1989, Palmer 1994, Shibatani 1985, Tsunoda 1991). If, however, a sentence does not have any element with sufficiently “subjecty” properties, it is called an “subjectless” or

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“impersonal” construction. In this paper I would like mainly to discuss subjectless or impersonal constructions. In doing so I would like to focus on the question how such constructions can be defined as opposed to “subjecty” or “personal” constructions, using syntactic, semantic as well as comparative-typological criteria.

2. Impersonal vs. personal (or subjectless vs. subjecty)

Let us start with impersonal constructions in German. I will first concentrate on the realisation, respectively non-realisation, of the so-called expletive *es* “it”. Only a few simple example sentences show how difficult it is to capture the distribution of the expletive adequately if it occurs in the so-called middle field.

(1) German :

a. Hier ist *(es) kalt.

here is (it) cold

‘It is cold here.’

b. Mir ist (?es) kalt.

me-DAT is (it) cold

‘I feel cold.’

(2) German :

a. In Berlin lebt *(es) sich schön.

in Berlin lives (it) REFL wonderfully

‘Living in Berlin is wonderful.’

b. In Berlin lässt (es) sich schön leben.

in Berlin lets (it) REFL wonderfully live

‘Living in Berlin is wonderful.’

(3) German :

- a. . . . weil (?es) Frieden/Krieg/Pause/schönes Wetter ist (Heidolph et al. 1981 : 330 f.)
 because (it) peace/war/time break/wonderful weather is
 ‘ . . . because it is a peace/war/a break/wonderful weather’
- b. . . . weil (?es) Schluss/Abend/Feierabend/Sonntag ist (ibidem.)
 because (it) end/evening/time for leaving work/Sunday is
 ‘ . . . because it is the end/evening/time for leaving work/Sunday’

On the one hand, German is not a “pro-drop” language, so that an explanation is needed for the fact why the subject expletive can or even must be missing in certain cases. On the other hand we have to ask to what extent such sentences are “impersonal”.

In trying to answer the first question I would like to claim for the following : Expletive *es* might have, albeit not explicitly, a meaning of its own, like the meaning of an “ambience” (cf. Bolinger 1977 discussing English *it*). *Es* in (1 a), for example, is a nominally realized form corresponding to *hier* “here”. (1 b), however, does not show an equivalent referent, and an element denoting it could be hardly inserted.

The second question, too, is related to such distinction as between (1 a) and (1 b). As long as the expletive can be said to have a meaning of its own, the sentence can — per definitionem — not be regarded as impersonal.

The so-called impersonal middle in (2 a) and the impersonal *lassen* (“let”)-middle in (2 b) differ in that the former shows more of an inherent characteristic of the referent involved, namely the place “Berlin”. The characteristic that is expressed by the *lassen*-middle is less defined by the referent itself (as in the “plain” middle) than by outer affording factors

related to the referent.

One evidence supporting this difference is the (non-)possibility of occurrence of an agent. (2 a) can not add an agent overtly, for example, the prepositional phrase *von alten Leuten* “by old people”, whereas the same addition is quite possible in (2 b).

Thus we have two characteristics, one intrinsic to the subject referent and therefore independent of outer factors, the other one related to those factors. If a property is to be described intrinsically to the subject referent, the corresponding subject referent has to be more “individualized”, and thus has to be encoded nominally as *es*. If, however, the referent in charge is to be described as co-participant in an event, it remains embedded within this event frame without being nominalised as *es*.

The sentences in (3) all have predicative complements. A predicative complement generally is equalized to its subject nominal. (3 a) shows such predicate complements, the nominal for each case is *es*, which refers to its respective situation (or, according to Bolinger’s terminology, “ambience”). The predicative complements themselves are similar to predicative adjectives in behaviour. (3 b), however, does not have near-adjectival complements, but strongly nominal ones: they are rather interpreted as existential. The *Krieg* “war”, for example, might be substantial as such and does not require a reference point expressed by an expletive. The *Sonntag* “Sunday”, however, can hardly stand by itself, but has to be related to the chronological reference point or “ambience”, which in this example is encoded as *es*.

Considering supposedly “typical” examples of the usage of the expletive as in *Es regnet* “It is raining” or *Es schneit* “It is snowing”, it is rather difficult to assert a specific meaning to the expletive. But such “petrified” expressions should not be considered as a touchstone indicating

possible occurrences of the expletive. Apart from those set expressions there are, as could be demonstrated above, many productive cases that allow us to conclude something about the status of the expletive. Hence the weather predicates might be integrated into the continuum of ambience predicates such as *Es klopft* “It knocks/someone is knocking on the door”, *Es brennt* “It burns/there is a fire”, *Es stinkt* “It smells/there’s a bad smell in the air”, *Es grünt* “It becomes green outside”. These patterns are fully productive and can also take personal subjects, the latter fact suggesting that the subject arguments actually bear a thematic role, even when instantiated by *es*.

3. The continuum between impersonal and personal

The question how an event, state or property is expressed, as for example in (1), cannot be resolved language-universally. Nevertheless we may assume that a description of a property presupposes its bearer, who (or which) is normally realised as a subject. In contrast, an event or a state may, as could be shown above, be more or less subjectless.

A survey of several European languages suggests that congruence between subject and verb, i.e. agreement, offers a criterion to determine whether an incident can be described primarily as a unique event or rather as a permanent property. Cross-linguistically we find a continuum which, on the one end, assembles the prototypical cases without agreement, and on the other end, has all those prototypical cases with agreement :

(4) French :

- a. Il reste trois pommes sur la table.
 it remain-SG three apples on the table
 'Three apples remain on the table.'
- b. *Il reste les trois pommes sur la table.
 it remain-SG the three apples on the table
 'The three apples remain on the table.'

(5) German :

- a. Gestern abend wurde begeistert getanzt.
 [impersonal *werden*-passive without object]
 yesterday evening became-SG feverishly danced
 'Last night they danced feverishly.'
- b. Dann wurde stundenlang Rätsel gelöst. [impersonal *werden*-passive
 with object]
 then became-SG for many hours puzzles solved
 'After that they solved puzzles for many hours.'
- c. *Nach dem Krieg war total zerstört.
 [impersonal *sein*-passive without object]
 after the war was-SG totally destroyed
 'After the war there was total destruction.'

(6) Spanish :

- a. Se vive bien aquí. (Babcock 1970 : 46)
 [impersonal *se*-middle without object]
 REFL live-SG well here
 'Life here is very nice.'
- b. Se mató a los cristianos. (ibidem.)
 [impersonal *se*-middle with a-marked object]
 REFL killed-SG the Christians
 'The Christians were killed.'

- c. *Está matado a los cristianos.
 [impersonal *estar*-passive with *a*-marked object]
 was-SG killed the Christians
 'The Christians were already killed.'

(7) Italian :

- a. Si vede [la stella] SUBJECT or OBJECT.
 REFL see-SG the star
 'They see the star.'
- b. Si vedono [le stelle] SUBJECT.
 REFL see-PL the stars-NOM
 'The stars are being looked at.'
- c. Si vede [le stelle] OBJECT. (Wehr 1995 : 1)⁽²⁾
 REFL see-SG the stars
 'They see the stars.'
- d. *Si vede [queste stelle] OBJECT.
 REFL see-SG these stars
 'They see these stars.'

(8) Russian :

- a. Shto nam d'elat'?
 what-ACC us-DAT do-3. SG. NEUT
 'What should we do?'
- b. Shto bylo sd'elano potom?
 what-NOM was done then
 'What was done then?'

(2) This example is not fully, but marginally acceptable. This fact, however, does not nullify the claim that there lies a continuum in terms of impersonal vs. personal (from (7 a) to (7 d)), but rather strengthens it.

In each set of examples, shifting between a “stage level predicate” (Kratzer 1995, Lühr 2002) and an “individual level predicate level” (ibidem.) can be observed. This goes hand in hand with the differing verbal agreement patterns in (4) through (8).

(4 a) is an existential sentence, i.e. a sentence in which the subject is not individualized in topicality, but still embedded in the event. By contrast, a more individualised subject such as the definite one in (4 b), does not license an impersonal construction.

German has two passives. The one is a dynamic passive formed with the auxiliary *werden* “to become”. It can be used both personally and impersonally; the sentences in (5) only assemble impersonal uses. As (5 b) shows, an accusative object may, although marginally, remain “in situ” in its object position, and consequently the verb does not agree with the plural feature of the object, but shows impersonal singular agreement instead. The other passive is a statal passive with the auxiliary *sein* “to be” and does not allow for an analogous construction; (5 c) is ungrammatical. The statal *sein*-passive requires the subjectivization of the accusative object, to which a specific resulting state — a henceforth more or less stable property — has to be assigned. This may be viewed as a shift towards an “individual level predicate”.

A similar statement can be made for Spanish with its reflexive passive that can also be used impersonally as in (6 a). The object does not necessarily have to be raised to become the subject of the sentence; this is shown by (6 b). For the passive using *estar* “be” as its auxiliary this raising-to-subject is obligatory.

The Italian examples in (7) show that with the *se*-passive, accusative objects may remain in their object position, unless they are definite. Italian as well as Spanish are pro-drop-languages, without expletive

subjects of the *es/il*-kind in German or French. Thus (7 a) can be a personal as well as an impersonal construction. It is personal if the nominative *la stella* agrees with *vede*, and impersonal, if the (obligatorily silent) expletive (if there is any) agrees with *vede*. In contrast, (7 b) unambiguously represents a personal usage, as the plural-subject *le stelle* agrees with the verb *vedono*. (7 c), however, shows singular agreement despite the plural noun phrase and, hence, is an impersonal construction. Allowing for this possibility, Italian can construe a “stage level predicate”, even if the participant in charge is a definite one.

Finally, let us see the Russian examples in (9). The point is the possibility to topicalize or individualize an interrogative element. As something that is not yet present is more difficult to be individualized and has to be more strongly embedded in the event, the interrogative element *shto* “what” in (8 a) as an accusative object can only be realised in an impersonal question. The same interrogative element in (8 b), however, can become the subject: Being something which has already happened, it can be asked as more individualized referent.

4. Language types and subject valency

In the following I would like to discuss the consequences that different language types have for the (non-)realisation of subject. Let’s start with the following Japanese examples :

(9) Japanese :

- a. *Koko-wa samui*
 here-NOM(TOPIC) be cold
 ‘It is cold here.’

- b. ??Boku-wa samui
 I-NOM(TOPIC) be cold
 'I feel cold.'
- c. Samui.
 be cold
 'I feel cold.'
- d. Boku-wa namakemono-da.
 I-NOM(TOPIC) be lazy
 'I am lazy.'

A referent, like *koko* “here”, can bear its inherent properties, to be considered an individual in (9 a). If a referent, however, experiences the sensation of coldness, it is not a bearer of the time-stable characteristic “to be cold”, but rather the bearer of an episodic and temporally bounded state. The former is an individual level predicate ; the latter a stage level predicate. As long as such an episodic state is of mental or physiological nature and, most of all, relates to the first person singular, its bearer remains unexpressed in Japanese (see (9 b), (9 c)). This does not imply, however, that certain persons, as for example the first person singular, generally remain unexpressed by pronouns, as would be the case in more consistent pro-drop languages or with general subjectlessness. If a referent is, for example, the bearer of a time-stable characteristic, a pronoun is generally realised, as is the case in (9 d).

For these examples the well-known distinction between “subject prominent languages” and “topic prominent languages” (Li and Thompson 1976, Huang 1984) has to be taken into account :

(10) a. [X+Y]

b. [X [(X)+Y]]

If one roughly assumes that subject prominent languages preferably realise the structure in (10 a) [X+Y], and topic prominent languages the structure in (10 b) [X [(X)+Y]], where in (10 b) the left X represents a topic and the X in round brackets represents a variable that is assigned the same referent as the topic, the following difference can be observed : (10 a) displays formal-grammatical agreement between X and Y, (10 b), however, displays functional-semantic agreement between X and Y.

X in (10 a) is an individual participating in an event, actively influencing it, whereas X in (10 b) rather has to be regarded as a location in a wide sense, one at which the event takes place or holds.⁽³⁾ If X denotes a person, in (10 a) this person will prototypically be an agent, in (10 b) it will prototypically be an experiencer.

A structure comparable to (10 b) can generally be assumed for the dative case in European languages, too, as shown by German examples (11) (cf. Wegener 1991). Although the structures of (11) and (10 b) are not completely identical, both share the common trait that X functions as a location in a wide sense, at which the event encoded by the embedded phrase occurs.

(3) The structure assumed in (10 b) is, in a way, “iconic”, because the eventuality encoded by [X+Y] takes place in the location denoted by the preceding topical X, at which the event [X+Y] occurs.

(11) German :

dass [dem Mann [das Buch gefällt]]
 [dem Mann [die Hände zittern]]
 [dem Mann [der Krug zerbrach]]
 [X [Y + Z]]
 that the man-DAT the book pleases
 the hands tremble
 the mug broke

It is safe to say that Japanese is more topic-prominent than subject-prominent. As is shown above Japanese psychological or physiological predicates can by themselves specify the experiencer, whence the topic usually is not overtly realised. Thereby the functional-semantic agreement is assumed to have already been achieved. This explains the ungrammaticality of (9 b) opposed to (9 c) : there the topic *boku-wa* would be redundant. By contrast, in (9 a) and (9 d) an overt topic is preferred, as the topic cannot be identified via the predicate alone.

It should be mentioned that psychological or physiological predicates in Japanese can roughly be divided into two groups: experiencer predicates and agent predicates. The contrasting examples (12), (13) and (14) illustrate this :

(12) Japanese :

- a. Samui. [experiencer predicate]
 be-cold
 'I feel cold.'
- b. Samugatteiru. [agent predicate]
 make-oneself-cold
 'He/She feels cold.'

(13) Japanese :

- a. Atama-ga itai. [experiencer predicate]
head-NOM hurt
'I have a headache.'
- b. Atama-o itagatteiru/Atama-o itameru. [agent predicate]
head-ACC hurt-cause
'He/She has a headache.'

(14) Japanese :

- a. Hara-ga tatsu. [experiencer predicate]
stomach stand up
'I am angry.'
- b. Hara-o tateru. [agent predicate]
set up stomach
'He/She is angry.'

Strictly speaking, experiencer predicates can only be perceived and thus only be used by the speaker, whereas agent predicates can be observed and thus described from the outside. If experiencer predicates and agent predicates alternate as in (12), (13) and (14), the former usually refer to the speaker, the latter usually to the non-speaker, typically a third person. In this way the dichotomy “sentient” vs. “agent” (Ikegami, forthcoming) is distinguished in form.

The alternation between experiencer predicates and agent predicates can also be traced in languages that use reflexive markers for the grammaticalised encoding of categories belonging to the so-called “middle” domain.

(15) German :

- a. Es kümmert mich dessen nicht. (Curme 1952 : 533)
 it mind me-ACC this-GEN not
 'I am not worried about this'
- b. Er kümmere sich darum. [grammaticalised reflexive pronoun]
 he mind REFL about this
 'He takes care of this'

A development from the pattern instantiated by (15 a) to that of (15 b) has diachronically taken place (Seefranz-Montag 1983). For our discussion it is crucial that the two sentences are not equivalent in meaning. (15 a) expresses a mental condition for the sentient in charge with the meaning "I feel no sadness about it", whereas (15 b) encodes an action through the agent, such as "He takes care of this". In this respect there is a parallel between German and Japanese : an impersonal construction in German and a subject(topic)less construction in Japanese on one side and a personal and a subject(topic)ful construction on the other side correspond to each other ; the formers are commonly experiencer predicates, the latter agent predicates.

In Japanese the experiencer is mostly covert, whereas in German it is typically realised by the dative. This difference can be demonstrated by further examples as in (16) and (17). The Japanese sentences in (16) do not have any overt topics, but the German ones in (17) do, and they are encoded as datives in impersonal constructions.

(16) Japanese :

- a. (??Boku-ni-wa) mou takusan-da!
 (I) already be-enough
 'I've had enough.'

- b. (??Boku-ni-wa) niou-zo.
 (to me) stink
 ‘Something stinks to me.’

(17) German :

- a. Mir reicht’s.
 me-DAT is.enough it
 ‘I’ve had enough.’
- b. Mir stinkt’s.
 me-DAT stinks it
 ‘Something stinks to me.’

As stated above, in Japanese a first person experiencer topic is not realised. This can be seen as an example of “subjectification” or “subjective construal” as defined by Langacker (1991). Compare his examples in (18).

(18) English :

- a. Vanessa is sitting across the table from me.
 b. Vanessa is sitting across the table.

(18 a) is more of an objective description of the situation, whereas (18 b) is a situation subjectively perceived by the speaker. Thus we can say the following for Japanese: Subjectification in cognition is closely connected to subjectlessness or topiclessness in the language, even if this may sound contradictory. Sentences may be subjectless and/or topicless because the subject or topic is unambiguously inferrable from the context. This is prototypically so with experiencer predicates in the first person.

It also stands to reason that, in Japanese, an objective description can encode first person reference overtly, e.g. if the situation is expressed in

the past tense and therefore in a way made objective as in (19). This once again makes a contrast to the topicless sentence *Samui* “I feel cold” which is perceived as present and thus subjective by the speaker.

(19) Japanese :

Anotoki boku-wa samukatta.
 at that time I-NOM(TOPIC) was-cold
 ‘At that time I felt cold’

With respect to present and subjective perception and encoding below some more data related :

(20) Japanese :

- a. Aa, (??tonari-ga) urusai.
 Oh, (neighbour) loud
 ‘My goodness, it’s noisy (in the neighbouring house).’
- b. Kyou-mo tonari-ga urusai.
 today-also neighbour loud
 ‘Today, too, the neighbours make a lot of noise.’

(21) Japanese :

- a. Maa, (*Romantikku-kaidou-wa) kirei!
 Oh, (Romantic Street-TOP) beautiful
 ‘Oh, the Romantic Street is beautiful!’
- b. Romantikku-kaidou-wa, hontouni kirei-da-ne
 Romantikku-kaidou-TOP really beautiful
 ‘The Romantic Street is really beautiful.’

The subject or topic tends to remain implicit if the verb refers to a temporally unique event or state, as in (20 a) and (21 a). In a description of a relatively time-stable property it is usually realised, as is shown in (20 b) and (21 b). In some languages, the difference between unique events or states on the one hand, and characteristics or time-stable properties, on the other, is expressed by two different forms or constructions, not only through the dichotomy subjectless vs. subjecty. In Japanese also the choice of adjectives is relevant, as is attested by (22) and (23).

(22) Japanese :

- a. (??Boku-wa) totemo ureshii.
(I) very happy
'I am very happy.'
- b. (Aitsu-wa) totemo yorokondeiru.
(he) very happy/pleased
'He is very pleased.'

(23) Japanese :

- a. (*Kankoku-ryouri-wa) kara(a)!
(Korean food) hot
'That's hot!'
- b. Kankoku-ryouri-wa karai.
Korean food hot
'Korean food is hot.'

In (22) two different adjectives alternate, while in (23) inflectional variation of a single adjective can be observed. The adjectives in (22 a) and (23 a) have in common that they are both used in a subjective-temporal or even exclamatory sense, whereas (22 b) and (23 b) are of

strongly objective-generic nature. Connected to this is the higher degree of subject-omissibility in the formers than the latters. In (23 a), for example, a subject is hardly realisable ; at best one could use *kore* “that”, a deictic demonstrative pronoun : *Kore, karaa!* “That, hot!”, which again strongly indicates the one-time episodicity of the encoded state.

Comparable alternations between adjectives can be found more distinctly and systematically in Russian so-called “short” vs. “long” forms as in (24).

(24) Russian :

- a. Ja vecela.
I cheerful [short adjective]
'I am pleased.'
- b. Ja vecelaja.
I cheerful [long adjective]
'I am a cheerful girl.'

(25) Russian :

- a. On bolen.
he sick [short adjective]
'He is sick.'
- b. On bolnoi.
he sick [long adjective]
'He is in poor health.'

Short adjectives are used to express a temporally bounded state, which is subjectively perceived by the speaker. Long adjectives, in contrast, tend to refer to a permanent characteristics, which is due to the speaker's objective judgement (Nichols 1981, Usuyama 1993, Vogel 1996). If, for instance, a

(female) speaker says that she is *vecela*, she feels joy, but when she is *vecelaja*, she is presented as a person who is joyful of nature. In Japanese the subject may be, or even has to be, missing, as in *Ureshii* “I am pleased”, while there analogue of (24 b) the realisation of the subject (as in *Watashi-wa youki-na ningen desu* “I am a cheerful person”) is strongly preferred. And the difference between (25 a) and (25 b) is expressed by way of the two different adjectival predicates *byouki-da* “be temporarily ill” and *byoukigachi-da* or *byoujaku-da* “be chronically ill, be prone to disease”. This alternation between shorter and longer forms for temporally bounded states as opposed to stable properties exactly corresponds to the Russian data.

It is moreover interesting to observe that *byouki-da* and *byoukigachi-da/byoujaku-da*, if used attributively, differ in terms of their suffix morphology: *byouki-no hito* “sick person” vs. *byoukigachi-na/byoujaku-na hito* “a person prone to get sick”. Here we have two different kinds of adjective ending with *-no* vs. *-na*. The suffix *-no* is a marker deriving adnominal modifiers, and it semantically derives states perceived as temporally bounded; there does not have to be in inherent relation between modifier and head noun, and this results in an interpretation as an episodic state, which might just as well not hold at all. The suffix *-na*, by contrast, serves to derive a modifier denoting a more permanent trait. It should be further mentioned that *kenkou* “healthy”, for example, becomes an attribute by adding *-na* (*kenkou-na hito* “a healthy person”), in contrast to *byouki*, which adds *-no*. Even though the concepts “healthy” and “ill” are considered antonyms, these two states have to be characterised differently in respect to temporality and permanency: The usual and stable state is to be healthy, and the special and temporally bounded one to fall ill.

In Russian, the choice between derived/long and underived/short adjectives, that is, the choice of the predicate itself is crucial; subject valency is left unaltered. In Japanese, in contrast, the occurrence of the subject is to a high degree triggered by non-episodicity, and by objectivity, which is connected with description of a more or less stable property of the referent. So the subject valency changes systematically, whereas Japanese also makes use of adjective selection in some cases, as we have seen. Adjective selection and subject valency are two different types of expression for one and the same function.

We moreover observe that functionally comparable alternations are there found in many languages. Besides the dichotomy of short vs. long adjectives, there is the case alternation between instrumental vs. nominative for the predicate noun in Russian or Lithuanian (Ambrasas 1997). The copula alternation between *ser* and *estar* in Spanish (Givón 1979) points in the same difference. And the distinction of adjectives preceding or following their head nouns in English (Bolinger 1967), as well as partly in French, and finally the distribution of uninflected vs. inflected adjectives in contemporary and older stages of German (Lühr 2002): All of these dichotomies, even if different in form and structure, focus on one functional contrastive: episodic and temporally bounded process or state vs. permanent and inherent property.⁽⁴⁾

(4) Similar contrasts have been covered by a variety of terms: actuality vs. potentiality (Leisi 1975), transient state vs. permanent state (Wierzbicka 1986), temporary state vs. permanent state (Croft 1991), or non-characterization vs. characterization (Bolinger 1967). For an extensive discussion see Vogel (1996).

5. Concluding remarks

A referent to which its permanent and inherent property is ascribed has to be overtly encoded. The occurrence of a subject is a typical device for this. At the same time it is an “individual level predicate” par excellence, which is opposed to a “stage level predicate”. So the more a predicate is construed as a “stage level predicate”, the more likely it will be encoded in a subjectless construction. The same in principle has been indicated for impersonal constructions in contrast to personal ones.

The availability of impersonal or subjectless constructions differs from language to language. But nonetheless a consistent continuum might be attested. If a “stage level predicate” in a given language goes along with an impersonal or subjectless construction, a corresponding “individual level predicate” can either have a personal or “subjecty” construction, or an impersonal or subjectless construction. If, however, a “stage level predicate” of a language is encoded in a personal or “subjecty” construction, a corresponding “individual level predicate” can only be realised by a personal or “subjecty” construction, but not by an impersonal or subjectless one. This might be a candidate for “implicational universals”, which needs much more detailed empirical research.

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