

This study deals in a synthetic way with the problems of impersonal expressions and of the concept of impersonality in linguistics both on the general level and with a special regard to the Italian, French and Czech languages which represent the basic source of examples used to illustrate the phenomena described.

First, the author considers on which principles is based the phenomenon of impersonality and which are the ontological grounds of impersonal expressions. This consideration results in the statement that the problem is based on different criteria that have in common the principle of negation of the concept person. The person is considered from different points of view: on one hand as a human being at the referential level, on the other hand as a grammar category (first, second and third person) and, in particular, as a personal agent. In accordance with this assertion the impersonal expressions are all types of expressions that do not serve to express the concept of person regarded from any criterion mentioned above. The whole of these means and linguistic elements include, besides the impersonal verbs that indicate natural phenomena and processes represented in the same way, the expressions that are impersonal by their grammatical structure and different expressions in which the impersonality consists in absence or deconcretising of the agent: this is a case of several constructions such as passive voice, factitive constructions, syntactical structures without subject, sentences with general or indefinite subject, derivated (secondary) use of the first, second and third person as well as infinite verbal forms. From another point of view the concept of impersonality can be determined on the basis of the criterion of orientation towards the non-participant in the act of communication (i.e. orientation towards the object of communication which includes the factor of objectivity).