



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMPERSONAL SENTENCES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PERIOD FROM THE 8<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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On May 6, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a meeting on measures to improve the system of teaching foreign languages. Several areas of knowledge are determined every year in Uzbekistan, the development of which is given priority attention. This year physics and foreign languages have become such areas. "The time has come to create in Uzbekistan a new system of teaching foreign languages, which will become a solid foundation for the future. Since we set ourselves the goal of building a competitive state, from now on, graduates of schools, lyceums, colleges and universities must be fluent in at least two foreign languages. This strict requirement should become the main criterion for the work of the head of each education institution", Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

At the earliest stages, English was a morphologically rich language which had many impersonal verbs. Throughout the Middle English (Mid E) and Modern English (Mod E) periods the language underwent numerous changes, and the impersonal constructions gradually ceased to be used until they were lost altogether.

It is necessary to explain the term "impersonal verb" before proceeding with the analysis. Impersonal verbs appear in the third person singular, the infinitive and the gerund. Fischer and van der Leek (1983, p. 346) define impersonal verbs as follows:

The term "impersonal" verbs refer to a class of verbs which have a common semantic core: they all express a physical or mental/cognitive experience which involves a "goal", in this case an animate "experiencer", and a "source", i.e., something from which the experience emanates or by which the experience is effected.

The impersonal verbs in Old English are often divided into three groups: zero-place impersonals, one-place impersonals, and two-place impersonals (Hogg, 2002, p. 99). An example of a one-place impersonals is shown below (Denison, 1993, p. 68): (1) Longad hine hearde yearns him (ACC) grievously. "He feels great discontent"

In the example above, the experiencer is in the accusative case, whilst the cause (hearde) is shown as an adjective. Apart from that, the dummy 'it' and 'there' in OE, still used in ModE, are pronouns which are needed when a sentential complement is expressed (Allen, 1986, p. 465).



Many linguists have studied the impersonal construction in detail. The most prominent among the earlier authors who tried to offer an explanatory account of impersonals include Van der Gaaf (1904), Jespersen (1927), Elmer (1981), Lightfoot (1981), Fischer and Van der Leek (1983), and Allen (1999).

Impersonal constructions are divided into three categories, which are named one, two, and three-place impersonals, and which are in turn divided into three different types. Type (i) occurs when there is not any nominative NP argument (which becomes subject less). Type (ii) usually involves the cause - or theme - subject and Type (iii) is the experiencer - subject if there is a nominative NP in argument function (it becomes subject-full). Zero-place impersonals consist of WEATHER verbs, and they belong to sentences, which have neither an experiencer nor a cause. Some verbs are used with two-place impersonals: HUNGER, SEEM, and PLEASE verbs. Type N considers the experiencer constructions, where the experiencer is in an oblique (non-nominative) case. However, it can either be in the accusative or dative cases, whereas the theme is either in the genitive or is the object of a preposition.

The “dummy (h)it” is a widely used impersonal construction, even in Mod E. English speakers still use it when the subject is not available in a sentence. The use of hit in HAPPEN words in OE started around the twelfth century, and it was the most convenient tool to adapt impersonal constructions. Apart from the dummy (h)it, we discussed the dative movement in the passive form of impersonal verbs, where OE had passive, where the benefactive remained in the dative case. When the finite verb lacks a nominative subject and is in the third person singular, the active structure becomes an impersonal passive. Many linguists have studied impersonal verbs from different perspectives, for example how and why the impersonal constructions were lost over time. Van der Gaaf focused on the change in the construction in the Mid E period, while Jespersen, on the other hand, claimed that OE impersonals were subject to disappear from the language due to changes in its case marking system. Lightfoot reinterpreted Jespersen’s idea by proposing that the SOV word order in OE was responsible. His proposal was to move the NP to the left, by NP Postposing. Fischer and Van der Leek have continued this work on the demise of OE impersonals.

Over time, the use of many verbs has decreased. The meaning of certain verbs, such as LICIAN and CWEMAN changed, LIKE gained dominancy over CWEMAN and adopted the personal use, rather than staying impersonal. With methinks, meseems, meneeds, etc., it has been observed that English has undergone a similar change in use of case as Icelandic.

Overall, the change in impersonal constructions had demised around the late fourteenth to fifteenth century with the reduction in lexical case marking, since they were not widely used by speakers. Over time, they have been limited to fixed expressions, such as methinks and meseems, as found in Shakespeare’s works.



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