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University of Tartu, Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics

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Supervisors: Professor Renate Pajusalu (University of Tartu)

Virve-Anneli Vihman, PhD (University of Tartu)

Reviewer: Docent Maria Vilkuna (University of Helsinki)

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ABSTRACT

Passive constructions have been at the heart of typological and theoretical treatments of grammatical voice because they are well attested in Indo-European languages and many other language families around the world. Impersonals, however, have received much less attention. The difficulties for the typological study of impersonals result in part from the application of the term 'impersonal' to highly heterogeneous phenomena ranging from nontransitive weather verbs to voice constructions such as subjectless passives and active impersonals. Due to the similarities in communicative function observed in passives and impersonals, impersonal voice constructions have often been misanalysed as passives. The bias in favour of passive constructions within contemporary formal linguistic theories has led many theorists to adopt principles or constraints on voice constructions that distort or even preclude the description of impersonal constructions.

The present thesis examines the properties of Estonian impersonal and passive voice constructions using a variety of approaches. The thesis treats the grammatical category of voice in traditional relational terms, analysing voice oppositions as reflections of changes in the mapping of grammatical functions onto the arguments of the predicate. The author stresses that passive and impersonal voice constructions differ in many respects: they reflect different changes in the verb's argument structure, they impose differing constraints on the verb classes allowed as input, they have differing semantic interpretations and syntactic forms, and they are distinguishable in terms of the acceptability of agentive adverbials. Estonian exhibits both voice constructions and thus represents an excellent opportunity for studying these two phenomena side by side.

The introductory chapter discusses the principal issues related to grammatical voice, highlighting the general characteristics of the two main voice oppositions, briefly surveys the treatment of voice in theoretical frameworks and outlines certain problems those frameworks encounter when analysing impersonals, examines earlier treatments of Estonian voice constructions and describes the contributions of the present thesis to the study of voice.

The core of the thesis consists of six articles, each of which concentrates on a specific aspect of the grammatical category of voice in Estonian that has not previously been studied in detail. The chief contributions of the thesis concern investigation of: (i) the constraints on impersonalization and passivization in Estonian, (ii) the issue of constructional overlap between impersonal and passive constructions, (iii) the realisation and interpretation of the demoted argument in Estonian voice constructions, and (iv) first language acquisition of voice in Estonian.

The studies reported on in the thesis provide strong support for the claim that the Estonian impersonal and passive are two separate constructions. The thesis can be used as source material for cross-linguistic comparison of voice constructions or as a point of reference for introducing adaptations into theoretical frameworks that seek to provide broadly applicable descriptions of voice constructions.

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CONTENTS

ARTICLES INCLUDED IN THE THESIS

I. Torn-Leesik, R. 2009. The voice system of Estonian. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung*, **62** (1/2), 72−90.

II. Torn-Leesik, R. 2007. Voice and modal verbs in Estonian. *Linguistica Uralica*, **XLIII** 3, 173−186.

III. Torn, R. 2006a. The Estonian periphrastic passive. In K. Kerge and M.-M. Sepper (eds.), *Finest Linguistics. Proceedings of the Annual Finnish and Estonian Conference of Linguistics. Tallinn, May 6−7, 2004*. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 73−92.

IV. Torn, R. 2006b. *poolt*-tarind eesti keele impersonaalis ja passiivis. In P. Penjam (ed.), *Lause argumentstruktuur. Tartu Ülikooli eesti keele õppetooli preprindid*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool, 108−121.

V. Torn-Leesik, R. and Vihman, V.-A. 2010. The uses of impersonals in spoken Estonian. *SKY Journal of Linguistics* **23**, 301−343.

VI. Vija, M., Torn-Leesik, R. and Pajusalu, R. 2009. Tegumood eesti lapse-keeles. *Eesti Rakenduslingvistika Ühingu Aastaraamat* **5**, 329−344.

I. INTRODUCTION

The present PhD thesis examines the nature of Estonian impersonal and passive voice constructions on the basis of extensive work that the author has conducted in this area. The grammatical category of voice has long been the subject of lively discussions with regard to Estonian and other languages, yet still causes heated debates concerning ontological issues such as: what criteria to use for the classification of certain constructions as impersonals or passives? Which features should be regarded as definitive for these two categories? Which theories describe them best and what methods should be used to analyse them?

Both typological and theoretical treatments of grammatical voice in general concentrate on the opposition between actives and passives. As this opposition is well attested and thoroughly studied in Indo-European languages as well as in many other language families of the world, it is often considered a basic one. Due to the assumed primacy of the active-passive opposition, another important voice opposition, the opposition between personal and impersonal voice – which can be found, for instance, in the Balto-Finnic, Slavic and Celtic languages – has received relatively little attention in either typological or theoretical studies and, indeed, has often even been misanalysed as an active-passive one. The misanalysis is largely due to the existence of the so-called impersonal or subjectless passives whose lack of explicit subjects renders them superficially similar to active impersonal constructions. The personal-impersonal opposition, however, stands apart from the active-passive opposition because impersonal and passive constructions differ from each other in many respects – changes in the verb's argument structure, the verb classes that can serve as input, the acceptability of agentive adverbials, and others. Although impersonals and passives can lead to similar communicative outcomes, the author of the thesis argues that they still represent different constructions.

The author accepts the view that the grammatical category of voice can be described in relational terms, that is, that voice oppositions reflect changes in the mapping of grammatical functions onto the arguments of the predicate. Yet, the two voice oppositions outlined above differ in their operational nature: passivization is a valence-reducing process that deletes the logical subject and changes the transitivity of the verb whereas impersonalization is a valence-maintaining process that merely suppresses the logical subject while preserving the syntactic and semantic transitivity of the verb. Estonian contains both voice constructions and thus provides an excellent opportunity to study these two phenomena side by side within a single linguistic system.

1.1. Aims of the thesis

The aims of the present thesis are to clarify the status of the impersonal and passive voice in Estonian, to describe the properties of these two voice constructions and to show that the Estonian impersonal voice is not a sub-construction of the passive macro-construction but should be considered a distinct voice category. To accomplish this, the thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the constraints on impersonalization and passivization in Estonian? Articles I (Torn-Leesik 2009), II (Torn-Leesik 2007) and III (Torn 2006a) (and others, to a degree) analyse the lexical, semantic and morphosyntactic constraints that apply to these voice operations (see p. 10 for the list of articles).
- How can one account for the constructional overlap between impersonals and passives? (Article III: Torn 2006a)
- What are the characteristics of the demoted argument in Estonian voice constructions? The thesis approaches this by tackling a series of more specific questions such as: how freely are agentive adverbials accepted in Estonian voice constructions and what constraints are they subject to? Are agentive adverbials used in voice constructions in spoken Estonian? What semantic information is conveyed by implicit arguments in Estonian voice constructions in spoken Estonian? The use of agentive adverbials in voice constructions in written Estonian is studied in Article IV (Torn 2006b). Article V (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010) investigates impersonals in spoken Estonian, analyses the interpretations available for implicit impersonal arguments and looks at the use of different agentive adverbials.
- Can data from studies of the acquisition of voice by Estonian children reveal differences between impersonal and passive constructions and thus lend support for distinguishing between them? This question is explored in Article VI (Vija, Torn-Leesik and Pajusalu 2009).

1.2. Data

The thesis studies voice constructions in written as well as spoken Estonian and, accordingly, draws its data from various sources. The morphologically annotated and unannotated corpora of written Estonian of the University of Tartu[1] as well as the Google search engine have been used to find examples of the usage of voice constructions to be analysed for constraints on impersonalization and passivization in Estonian (see Articles I, II, III, IV). In order to shed light on the divergences between passives and impersonals, the author has looked for possible differences between the input verbs accepted by these constructions and analysed the extent to which the two allow the use of agentive adverbials with *poolt* 'by'.

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[1] http://www.cl.ut.ee/korpused/segakorpus/index.php?lang=et

In addition, judgments of the author and other native speakers of Estonian have been used to test the acceptability of certain instances of voice constructions (Articles III, IV). Article IV includes a short questionnaire on the acceptability of the use of agentive adverbials in both voice constructions.

Most studies on Estonian voice constructions focus on written data. Article V of the thesis is novel in that it draws its data from spoken Estonian. The study of the interpretations of implicit arguments in voice constructions examined in this article is based on two corpora of spoken language: the Corpus of Spoken Estonian[2] and the unedited minutes of the sittings of the Estonian Parliament (the *Riigikogu*)[3]. These corpora differ in their degree of formality, thus providing an opportunity to highlight differences in the use of impersonals in spontaneous and institutionalised speech settings.

The acquisition data of the thesis analysed in Article VI are drawn from both spontaneous and elicited child speech, namely from a comprehension experiment conducted with 4−6-year-old Estonian children and the spontaneous speech data of Estonian children (aged 0;11.22–3;1.13) available in the CHILDES corpus[4]. The results of the comprehension experiment show the extent to which Estonian children of that age understand impersonal and passive constructions, while data from the CHILDES corpus, which have been collected in longitudinal studies, provide an opportunity to see at approximately what age Estonian children begin to use voice constructions and in what contexts.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of an introductory chapter, six articles, and a summary in Estonian. The introductory chapter clarifies the broad issues relating to grammatical voice, highlights the general characteristics of the two main types of voice opposition, briefly discusses the treatments of voice in theoretical frameworks and the problems these frameworks encounter when analysing impersonals, examines earlier treatments of Estonian voice constructions, describes the contribution of the present thesis to the study of such constructions and summarises the main points of the study of Estonian voice constructions by the author.

The core of the thesis consists of six articles, each of which concentrates on a specific aspect of Estonian voice constructions. Articles I and II study the constraints that apply to impersonal and passive constructions in Estonian. Article III concentrates on the issue of constructional overlap between impersonal and passive constructions. Articles IV and V explore the use of agentive adverbials in written and spoken voice constructions, whereas the main focus of Article V is

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[2] http://www.cl.ut.ee/suuline
[3] http://www.riigikogu.ee/?op=steno&stcommand=calendar&year=2009&month=01
[4] http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/

the analysis of interpretations of implicit impersonal arguments in spoken Estonian. Article VI analyses data from children's acquisition of Estonian voice constructions.

In article V, co-written with V.-A. Vihman, the contributions of the authors are equal. In article VI, co-written with M. Vija and R. Pajusalu, the author of the thesis provided the theoretical background of voice and participated in the joint interpretation of the data drawn from the two studies presented in the article.

2. THE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY OF VOICE

The grammatical category of voice has been defined in various ways by linguists, reflecting different views of the core voice alternations. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1427) regard voice as "a system where the contrasting forms differ in the way semantic roles are aligned with syntactic functions, normally with some concomitant marking on the verb." This definition provides a characterisation of the broad class of voice constructions. Klaiman (1991: 1) emphasises the traditional idea that voice is a verbal category by stating "grammatical voice is manifested in systems in which alternations in the shapes of verbs signal alternations in the configurations of nominal statuses with which verbs are in particular relationships." Shibatani (1988: 3) maintains that voice should be seen as "a mechanism that selects a grammatically prominent syntactic constituent – subject – from the underlying semantic functions (case or thematic roles) of a clause."

In the most general sense, voice alternations thus involve a change in the prominence of participants. In the case of the active-passive alternation, the prominence of the 'logical subject'[5] of a passive construction is considerably reduced compared to that of the corresponding active construction. This reduced prominence of the logical subject is related to a change in the verb's valence: passive constructions are normally syntactically detransitivised counterparts of actives in which the logical subject, if expressible at all, can only be realised as an oblique verbal dependent. Although personal-impersonal voice alternations also result in the logical subject of the impersonal construction being rendered less prominent, the reduction in prominence does not require a change in the valence of the verb. Instead, it is accomplished by leaving the logical subject obligatorily unexpressed by any argument of the verb.

As mentioned above, typological and theoretical treatments of grammatical voice both concentrate mainly on the opposition between the active and passive voice, which is well attested in Indo-European languages as well as in many other language families of the world. The opposition between personal and impersonal voice, however, has received less attention in typological and theoretical studies and has often been subsumed under the active-passive alternation. One of the

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[5] As there are no universally accepted terms for verbal dependents, in general descriptions of voice this thesis adopts the traditional terms 'logical subject' and 'logical object' to refer to the dependents targeted by passivization and other relation-changing operations. These traditional terms abstract away from more fine-grained thematic contrasts that are not of central importance to the analysis of passive and impersonal constructions. The traditional terms also retain compatibility with Relational Grammar analyses, in which, for example, an 'initial 1' is defined in terms of an underlying relational analysis which is argued not to be reducible to a thematic classification. For the analysis of passives, it is important to be able to characterise the subject of an unergative verb; the notion of 'logical subject' (or 'initial 1') achieves that more clearly than any more thematically explicit terms. Conversely, for the analysis of impersonals, it is important to be able to characterise a grammatical subject that is strongly associated with a human interpretation.

reasons that impersonals tend to be misanalysed and neglected in typological and theoretical studies may lie in the broadness and diversity of the notion of impersonality itself (Siewierska 2008; Malchukov and Siewierska 2011).[6] Another potential source of misanalysis is the similar communicative function of passive and impersonal voice constructions. Both of these voice constructions target subjects and reduce the prominence of the subject argument, yet they achieve their similar communicative aims through different morphosyntactic means.

The present thesis concentrates on the impersonal and passive voice constructions in Estonian. The impersonal voice, the main voice category in Estonian, can be formed from both intransitive and transitive verbs. It has a distinct verbal affix in simple tenses, as illustrated in (1) while in compound tense forms it consists of the auxiliary *olema* 'be' and the passive participle, as in (2). The impersonal clause lacks a surface subject and the suppressed subject argument typically refers to a human agent. The personal passive in Estonian, however, is more limited in usage and can only be formed of transitive verbs, with the auxiliary *olema* 'be' and the passive participle. The passive clause has a nominative subject that agrees with the auxiliary, as illustrated in (3). (For a more detailed description of Estonian voice constructions, see Article I).[7]

(1) *Kolmandat korda* **matkati** *Struve meridiaankaarel.*[8]
third.PAR time.PAR hike.IMPERS.PST Struve.GEN meridian-arc.ADE
'For the third time, one was hiking / people[9] hiked along Struve's meridian arc.'

(2) *Oma iidoli vastuvõtuks* **oli** **joonistatud** *pilte ....*[10]
REFL.GEN idol.GEN reception.TRAN be.PST.3SG draw.PPP picture.PL.PAR
'They had drawn pictures in preparation for receiving their idol.'

(3) *Kõrvekülas tegutsenud Saksa spioonid* **olid** **kinni püütud**!*[11]
Kõrveküla.INE act.APP German spy.PL.NOM be.PST.3PL PERF catch.PPP
'The German spies that had been active in Kõrveküla were caught!'

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[6] Siewierska (2008) and Malchukov and Siewierska (2011) note that, despite the fact that impersonal constructions have been studied for some time in Indo-European linguistics, a real attempt to describe these constructions cross-linguistically is a relatively recent one.

[7] For a more detailed description of Estonian grammar in English, see Erelt (2003).

[8] http://www.v-maarja.ee/index.php?part=news&id=4242&cal_day=&cal_month= &PHPSESSID

[9] In this thesis, the implicit impersonal referent is translated using 'one', 'they' and 'people', depending on the particular example, as these convey the meaning of the Estonian impersonal better than the English passive does.

[10] http://www.ohtuleht.ee/118799/see-on-suur-tunne-et-saab-koju

[11] http://ekspress.delfi.ee/kuum/kova-nuhkimine-laanemere-aares?id=69124067

This section of the thesis focuses on the characteristics of passive and impersonal voice constructions in general. It also briefly discusses the theoretical treatment of grammatical voice and highlights the problems that some theoretical approaches encounter in analysing impersonal voice constructions.

2.1. Passives

The construction most frequently included under the category of voice is the personal passive of the English type. Yet typological studies have shown that there are a variety of constructions that can be described as passive, including personal or subjectless (impersonal), periphrastic or synthetic, plain or reflexive, stative or dynamic, and agentive or agentless types (Siewierska 1984: 1). Despite the fact that languages possess different means of forming passive constructions, the following features represent some of the central properties taken to characterise passives by linguists from different traditions (Jespersen 1924, Lyons 1968, Siewierska 1984, 2005, to name but a few):

a) the passive contrasts with the active construction;
b) the object of the active corresponds to the subject of the passive;
c) the subject of the active corresponds to an optional oblique in the passive;
d) the oblique may be marked by a preposition or a case-inflection, or left out altogether;
e) the verb displays distinct morphology compared to the corresponding form of the active voice;
f) the construction is pragmatically restricted relative to the active;
g) the passive construction may lack any overt subject with semantic content.

2.1.1. Personal passives

The features (a)–(f) above are often used to characterise the personal passive, which in general is considered the prototypical passive construction. In the personal passive the subject of the passive acquires many of the same subject properties as an active subject, e.g., in nominative-accusative languages it receives nominative case and agrees with the verb. In the personal passive construction, the subject has semantic content. The expression of the active subject in the passive is generally optional as an agentive oblique phrase. This type of personal passive is illustrated by the German example in (4b), where the accusative object of the active, *einen Brief* in (4a), corresponds to the nominative subject *ein Brief* in the passive. The agentive phrase *vom Mädchen* is optional. Personal passives are in general formed from transitive verbs (see also section 2.1.5). Passivization, however, does not affect the semantic role of the active object, which means that, while passivization makes the verb syntactically intransitive, it does not affect semantic transitivity.

(4) a. *Das   Mädchen   schrieb   einen   Brief.*
the.NEUT.NOM   girl   write.3SG.PST   one.ACC   letter
'The girl wrote a letter.'[12]

   b. *Ein   Brief   wurde   (vom   Mädchen) geschrieben.*
a.MASC.NOM   letter   was   (from+the.DAT girl)   written
'A letter was written (by the girl.)'

From a formal perspective, the passive voice in German illustrates a periphrastic personal passive construction in that the passive verbal morphology involves the use of passive participle of the main verb and the addition of a specific auxiliary. Personal passives can also be synthetic in form[13] as illustrated by the Latin example in (5) or reflexive as in the Italian example in (6). The synthetic passive in (5) is formed by affixation while reflexive passives use reflexive markers, which can either be independent items as in (6) or affixes.

(5)   *Amatur.*
love.3SG.PASS
'He is loved.'

(6)   *Nel   medio   evo   si   bruciavano   le   streghe*
In:the   middle age   REFL   burn.PST.3PL   the.FEM.PL   witches
'In the middle ages witches were burned.'   (Siewierska 1984: 165)

The use of an agentive phrase in the passive is optional. Keenan (1985: 247) considers agentless passives 'basic' because this type is the most widespread across the world's languages. Keenan states that if a language has any passive construction, it will typically have a basic passive.[14] In many languages, such as Latvian, Urdu, Classical Arabic, Igbo, Cueno, among others, passives do not allow the expression of an agentive oblique at all. The agent of a personal passive does not generally have any specific restrictions, in contrast to subjectless passives (see section 2.1.2.). It may refer to humans or other animate entities, as in (7), but it can also refer to natural forces (8) or even abstract entities (9).

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[12] Unless indicated otherwise, the examples are constructed or provided by the author of the thesis.
[13] Keenan (1985: 251) calls them strict morphological passives.
[14] Keenan (1985: 247) also notes that there are languages which have no formal passives (e.g., New Guinean languages such as Enga, or Chadic languages, Tamang, and Isthmus Zapotec; for references see Keenan 1985: 247, also Siewierska 1984: 23, 27; Haspelmath 1990: 28). These employ some other grammatical means to express functional equivalents of basic passives, the most common of which is an active sentence with a 3rd plural subject with an impersonal interpretation.

(7)   *The child had been badly bitten by mosquitoes.*

(8)   *John was killed by lightning.*

(9)   *She was ruined by her ambition.*

2.1.2. Subjectless passives

Although the personal passive of the English or German type is seen as the prototypical passive, it is not the only type of passive. Languages such as Polish, German, Turkish, Dutch, to name just a few, also have subjectless passives (Blevins 2003[15]) or, as they are often referred to in literature, 'impersonal' passives (see Siewierska 1984: 3f). Subjectless passives are in general formed from intransitive verbs, and have no overt subject with semantic content or, depending on the language, have a dummy subject that is a positional placeholder with no thematic or referential content. The passivization of intransitive verbs makes such verbs syntactically nontransitive, governing no grammatical functions. The examples in (10) and (11) illustrate subjectless passives in Polish and Dutch respectively.

(10)   *Tutaj   było   tańczone.*
       here   was.3SG.NEUT   dance.PART.SG.NEUT
       'There was dancing here. / The dancing was done here.'   (Kibort 2004: 29)

(11)   *Er   werd   door   studenten   gedanst.*
       there was   by   students   danced
       'There was dancing by the students.'[16]

Whether or not the expression of an oblique is allowed in the subjectless passive depends on the language. As Siewierska (1984) notes, cross-linguistic studies have shown that agentless subjectless passives are far more frequent than subjectless passives with an agentive oblique. Languages such as Mojave, Kannada, Kolami, Turkish, Spanish and Italian do not allow an agentive oblique in the subjectless passive (Siewierska 1984: 100). In contrast to personal passives, the agent of the subjectless passive is generally restricted to human beings.

Passivization of verbs that govern oblique cases can also yield a subjectless passive construction, as shown by the German example of the verb *helfen* in (12).

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[15] Blevins (2003, 2006) suggests the term 'subjectless passives' as an alternative to the widely-used term 'impersonal passive' in order to avoid overloading the term 'impersonal', which can then be preserved for active impersonal constructions. I will follow Blevins's terminology here.

[16] This example was provided by Axel Jagau.

The verb *helfen* takes a dative object argument but since datives are not admissible as subjects in German, dative arguments are barred from 'advancing' to become passive subjects. Thus, in (12b) the dative object *diesen Studenten* of the active retains its dative case and does not become the subject in the passive as can be seen by the lack of verb agreement. If the dative argument is not moved to the initial position, the dummy *es* is used to enforce a V2 order instead, as in (12c).

(12) a. *Der   Lehrer hilft   diesen   Studenten*
       the.MASC.NOM teacher help.PST these.DAT students.DAT
       'The teacher helps the students.'

  b. *Diesen   Studenten   wurde (vom   Lehrer)   geholfen.*
     these.DAT students.DAT was   by+the.DAT teacher   helped.
     'These students are helped by the teacher.'

  c. *Es   wurde   diesen   Studenten   (vom   Lehrer)   geholfen.*
     there become.PST these.DAT students.DAT by+the.DAT teacher   helped.
     'These students are helped by the teacher.'

The classification of subjectless passives is, however, not entirely uncontroversial. While the formation of subjectless passives from intransitives and verbs taking arguments with oblique cases is clear, subjectless transitives have been a source of disagreement among linguists, as they are considered syntactically ambiguous: their active subject is suppressed, but the object is not promoted to subject. Some linguists (e.g., Sobin 1985, Lavine 2013) have interpreted these as non-promotional passives, emphasising that they retain structural, accusative objects, while others (e.g., Blevins 2003 and references therein) treat them as impersonal actives with suppressed unspecified (human) subjects. An oft-cited example of subjectless transitives is the Ukrainian sentence in (13), which retains the accusative object *cerkvu,* here in sentence-initial position but clearly not a subject.

(13) *Cerkvu   bulo   zbudovano   v 1640 roc'i   (Lesevym).*
    church.FEM.ACC be.PST.NEUT built.IMPERS[17] in 1640 year   Lesiv.INST
    'There was built a church in 1640 (by Lesiv).'   (Sobin 1985: 658)

O'Connor and Maling (2014) claim that disagreement among linguists in categorising subjectless transitives results from differing theories of passives, as well as differences in native speaker judgments, which allow two distinct analyses of these subjectless constructions to persist. They claim that tests for the syntactic presence of the subject in subjectless transitives help to clarify the syntactic ambiguity and in most cases the tests show that there are no non-promotional

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[17] Sobin (1985) does not provide glosses to the verb forms. Blevins uses the gloss 'impersonal', which is also followed here.

transitive passives, which is also the position adopted in the present thesis. Additionally, Kibort and Maling (2015) consider unaccusativity to be one of the most reliable tests for determining the nature of subjectless transitives.

2.1.3. Functions of the passive

Passivization affects the information structure of the clause by foregrounding some arguments and backgrounding others. Givón (1982) proposes three functional domains of passives[18]: clausal topic assignment, impersonalization and detransitivization. Clausal topic assignment (henceforth 'topicalization') involves the assignment of the topic function to a nonagent argument in the passive (Givón 1982: 143). In the case of transitive verbs, passivization reduces the syntactic valency of the verb by demoting the logical subject and promoting the logical object. It is illustrated in example (14), where the promotion of the logical object *a fly* results in the assignment of the (surface subject and, hence) topic function to it in (14b).

(14) a. *John killed a fly*
     b. *A fly was killed (by John).*

In the case of intransitive verbs that yield subjectless passives, other nonagent arguments may become topicalised. For instance, in the German example in (12b) above, the dative argument *diesen Studenten* is the topic in the passive clause. The second functional domain, impersonalization, involves the suppression or deletion of the logical subject (*John* in (14b)). Detransitivization – the third domain – reduces the transitivity of the passive verb. Thus the passive verb *killed* in (14b) is syntactically intransitive, i.e. taking only one core argument (*a fly*). Languages differ with respect to how many of these functions the passive construction realises.

    Shibatani (1985: 837) argues that agent defocusing (Givón's impersonalization) is the main pragmatic function of passives.[19] Agent defocusing in passives leads to a change in the relative prominence of the active subject and object

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[18] According to Givón (1982) passives form a continuum in which some types exhibit all of these functions while others only some. At one end of the continuum he places the English passive, while on the other end the Ute passive, which retains the valency of the verb, allows any case role to become the topic and involves obligatory deletion of the agent argument. This is a good example of the type of broad analysis that is likely to include impersonal constructions somewhere along the voice 'continuum'.

[19] Shibatani (1985: 837) claims that defocusing of the agent is the primary pragmatic function of the passive prototype and that this function is common to passives of intransitives and passives without promotion (in this thesis active impersonals'). He treats the category of voice as a gradient phenomenon, stateing that "passives form a continuum with active sentences" (1985: 821).

arguments. While in active constructions the subject argument is more prominent than the object argument, the opposite obtains in the passive construction. However, the effect of prominence change in argument structure is not necessarily a defining property of passives, but may be a side effect of the change in grammatical relations in passives. As Kibort (2004: 23) puts it, "defocusing or despecifying the agent can be taken as defining the broadly conceived category of unspecified-agent constructions."

Whereas in the personal passive the prominence shift involves a change in the subject and object arguments, in the case of subjectless passives, the shift takes place between the only argument of an intransitive verb and the activity denoted by the verb. When a subjectless passive does not allow the use of an agentive oblique, the prominence of the activity is even more in focus. This focus shift onto the activity is also common to impersonal voice constructions, which suppress their logical subject but do not alter valency (see below).

2.1.4. Demotion or promotion?

Many traditional theories propose that the formation of the passive involves the promotion of the active object and the concomitant demotion or deletion of the active subject. Thus, in personal passives the active object is promoted to subject position in the passive, while the active subject is demoted to that of an oblique or deleted altogether. These two factors, subject demotion and object promotion, have figured prominently in attempts to definitively characterise the universal properties of the passive. As Blevins notes (2003: 477), the problem lies in selecting the properties of the personal passive that should be taken as definitional as opposed to those that may be considered as merely characteristic. Either subject demotion or object promotion can be taken as primary.

In the case of the personal passive, which exhibits both processes, there appears to be no basis for preferring one over the other. Proponents of Relational Grammar (notably Perlmutter and Postal 1977, 1984) consider object promotion to be the primary feature, which then entails the demotion of the logical subject. This view, however, has been criticised as descriptively inadequate, because it does not directly account for subjectless passives. Thus Keenan (1975: 347), while accepting the need for object promotion and subject demotion as such, claims that subject demotion must be treated as the primary or independent condition. Comrie (1977) criticises the promotional approach as a whole, again on the grounds of its failure to account for subjectless passives. He proposes an alternative in which 'spontaneous' demotion of the subject nominal is primary in subjectless passives, and thus treats demotion as the basic property of the passive. This allows a unified analysis of subjectless and personal passives, both of which are derived by demotion. Linguists working within Relational Grammar (e.g., Perlmutter and Postal 1984) continued to regard object promotion as primary even in the case of subjectless passives by proposing the promotion of a dummy object. The debate over the primacy of object promotion or agent demotion is

reflected in other linguistic theories as well. In earlier analyses of the passive in the Government and Binding framework the passive morpheme absorbed the accusative case and thus caused A-movement of the object to the structural subject position to check case (Chomsky 1981), while later analyses in the same framework (Jaeggli 1986, Baker 1988) postulated that the passive morphology absorbs the external theta-role, making subject demotion the main property of passives.

2.1.5. The Unaccusative Hypothesis

Descriptive grammars often mention the fact that certain verbs or verb classes do not seem to allow passivization. This is illustrated by the Polish example containing the verb *zostawać* 'remain' in (15):

(15)   *W   kuchni   było   zostawane   (przez ludzi).
        in   kitchen   was.3SG.NEUT   remain.PART.SG.NEUT   (by people)
       'There has been remaining in the kitchen (by people).' (Kibort 2004: 73)

An explanation of the resistance of these verb classes to passivization has been proposed with the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978) which divides intransitive verbs into two classes: unergatives and unaccusatives. Unergative verbs include verbs such as *dance, ski, walk*, whose surface subject corresponds to the logical subject. These stand in contrast to unaccusative verbs such as *be, remain, arrive*, *die*, whose surface subject corresponds to the logical object. If passivization is seen as a phenomenon that demotes logical subjects, it is clear that "[no] impersonal Passive clause in any language can be based on an unaccusative predicate" (Perlmutter and Postal 1984: 107), i.e., it cannot apply to verbs without such subjects. Perlmutter (1978: 162−163) also notes that the syntactic distinction of unergatives and unaccusatives is semantically determined. For instance, unergatives tend to describe willed or volitional acts or some involuntary bodily processes while unaccusatives are verbs with a patient argument and verbs of existing and happening, non-voluntary emission of stimuli, aspectual predicates and duratives.

The Unaccusative Hypothesis can also shed light on many of the superficially 'transitive' verbs that resist passivization (*resemble, last, weigh*, *fit,* etc.) (Perlmutter and Postal 1984, Siewierska 1984).[20] If the initial argument structure of these verbs does not have a logical subject, then passivization as a subject-targeted demotion rule will simply fail to apply, as illustrated in the examples below.

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[20] Siewierska (1984: 189) states that the same results can be obtained cross-linguistically for all measure verbs (e.g., *cost, last, number*), verbs of equality and comparison (e.g., *equal, mean, resemble*), verbs of suiting (e.g., *suit, become, fit*) and verbs of possession (e.g., *have, belong, lack*).

(16) a. *Mary resembles her mother.*

   b. *∗Her mother is resembled by Mary.*

(17) a. *The concert lasted two hours.*

   b. *∗Two hours was lasted by the concert.*

(18) a. *This dress fits her perfectly.*

   b. *∗She is perfectly fitted by this dress.*

The Unaccusative Hypothesis seems to provide a good diagnostic for passive constructions, as impersonals in many languages (e.g., Polish, Estonian, Welsh, Irish) are not constrained by the Unaccusative Hypothesis (see section 2.2.1). The passive test is one of the many diagnostics that has been proposed for studying unaccusativity cross-linguistically. Some of the other diagnostics are auxiliary selection, locative inversion, resultative and causative constructions (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995). Not all the tests work for every language. For instance, in Estonian, of these tests, only the passive test and the resultative construction can be used as a diagnostic to distinguish between unaccusatives and unergatives (Tamm 2003). Moreover, not all linguists agree upon the grammatical locus of the unaccusative-unergative distinction. For instance, whereas Van Valin (1990) gives these two classes of intransitives purely semantic characterisation and denies that unaccusativity is syntactically encoded, Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 14) maintain, similarly to Perlmutter (1978), that the syntactic classi-fication of unergative and unaccusative verbs is semantically determined.[21] For the present thesis, however, the most pertinent finding is that impersonal voice constructions can be formed of unaccusative verbs, and thus they differ in this respect from passive constructions.

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[21] Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 5ff) claim that there are two "strong" approaches to unaccusativity: the syntactic approach and the semantic approach. Whereas the syntactic approach denies the semantic predicatability of unaccusativity, the semantic approach denies the syntactic encoding of unaccusativity. The authors themselves represent the syntactic approach yet believe that the syntactic classification of intransitive verbs into unergatives and unaccusatives shows correlated semantic distinctions.

2.2. Impersonals

The notion of impersonality subsumes a diverse range of constructions and has been approached from different angles. As Malchukov and Siewierska (2011: 1) note, the difficulties for the typological study of impersonals "stem from different interpretations of the term impersonal, as well as from the heterogeneity, both semantic (weather verbs, experiential predicates, presentational constructions) and structural (basic impersonals vs impersonal passives) of impersonal construction."[22]

The diversity of the constructions called impersonal is also reflected in two broad approaches to the analysis of impersonals, which have been summarised by Siewierska (2008: 116) under the heads of the structural and the communicative-functional analysis. The structural approach focuses on the lack of a canonical subject that is a fully referential verbal argument, while the communicative-functional approach concentrates on agent defocusing. According to the structural, subject-based view of impersonalization, impersonal constructions include four types: a) constructions whose subjects are not fully referential, (e.g., the German *man* clauses, the English non-referential *they* clauses; impersonal voice constructions of the Estonian type (*lauldakse* 'one/ they/ people sing(s)', *loeti* 'one/they/people read'), Romance and Slavic reflexive impersonals, expressions with natural forces or some other phenomena as subjects); b) constructions whose subjects lack canonical subject properties (e.g., predicates of sensations, emotions, need, potentiality; existential and locative constructions); c) constructions with expletive subjects (e.g. the German subjectless ('impersonal') passives, various meteorological predicates); and d) constructions with no overt subject at all (Siewierska 2008: 116–120).

In the communicative-functional approach, agent defocusing is understood as reducing the prominence of the causal participant of an event from its assumed status. Defocusing may involve "the non-elaboration or under-elaboration of the instigator, the demotion of the instigator from its prototypical subject and topic function or both demotion and non-elaboration" (Siewierska 2008: 121). Although a comparison of the two approaches shows a considerable degree of overlap in the type of constructions that are considered impersonal, there are still

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[22] Recent work in typology has expressed concerns about the linguistic commensurability of the categories and general terminology used for language description and comparison (Haspelmath 2010, Croft and Van Lier 2012). For instance, Haspelmath (2010: 663) claims that the analysis of particular languages and the comparison of languages should be treated as independent and that cross-linguistic comparison should be based on comparative concepts created by typologists and not on cross-linguistic categories. However, detailed descriptions of the properties of constructions in individual languages, such as of the description of the Estonian impersonal in this thesis, are of use in identifying the potentially definitional properties of these constructions and thereby clarify the characteristics that constructions in other languages would need to exhibit to qualify as 'impersonals' in the same sense. Generalising over detailed descriptions of individual constructions can also provide a basis for isolating deeper commonalities that may have led to their classification as members of a common construction type in the first place.

differences that distinguish one from the other. For instance, both personal passives and locative subject clauses are treated as impersonals because these constructions contain a subject argument that is not an agent. Moreover, proponents of this approach take a more discourse-based line by not only focusing on the operations on argument structure but also on how the speaker construes the event as impersonal. In addition, agent defocusing is treated as a matter of degree (Siewierska 2008: 123−125).

This section of the thesis examines the characteristics of morphosyntactic impersonal voice constructions and excludes other types of impersonal constructions mentioned in the literature. Morphosyntactically marked impersonal voice constructions are attested in many language families, such as the Finno-Ugric, Slavic and Celtic. As mentioned above, compared to the passive construction and its treatment in contemporary theoretical approaches, impersonal constructions have received much less attention. In addition to being underrepresented in the literature, they are also often misrepresented, due to occasional formal and functional similarities with the passives. Yet, passives and impersonals exhibit several morphosyntactic differences that justify their analysis as distinct categories rather than treating them as subclasses of a single macro-construction.

2.2.1. Morphosyntactic characteristics of impersonal voice constructions

A relational treatment of voice highlights key differences between passives and impersonals. Whereas passivization reduces the valence of the verb by detransitivising it and deleting its logical subject, impersonalization preserves the valence of the verb, that is, it preserves its transitivity but inhibits the syntactic realisation of the subject. Whereas in passives there is one less 'core' argument than in the corresponding active constructions, in impersonals the number of term arguments is maintained (Blevins 2003: 475). The difference between passives and impersonals is illustrated by the Polish examples in (19) and (20).

(19) *Piotr   był   bity   (przez kaprala).*
     Peter.MASC.NOM   was.MASC   beat.PART.MASC.NOM   (by   corporal)
     'Peter was beaten (by the corporal).'   (Kibort 2001: 164)

(20) *Bito   Piotra.*
     beat.IMPERS[23]   Peter.MASC.ACC
     'They beat Peter.'   (Kibort 2004: 54)

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[23] In her 2001 paper, Kibort uses the gloss PART.SG.NEUT because the impersonal form is historically related to the passive participle with a SG.NEUT ending, but in later papers, e.g., Kibort (2004, 2008), she uses the gloss IMPERS.

Example (19) is a Polish personal passive, where the logical subject is deleted or demoted and the active object is promoted to the passive subject where it receives the subject case and agrees with the verb. Example (20) illustrates a Polish impersonal construction where the surface subject is suppressed but the object retains its object properties (the accusative case) and cannot be moved to the subject position. In Polish, agentive obliques cannot be used in impersonal constructions (Kibort 2004) as shown in example (21).

(21) *Bito   Piotra   przez   kaprala.
      beat.IMPERS   Peter.(MASC).ACC   by   corporal
      intended: 'Peter was beaten by a/the corporal.'   (Kibort 2004: 55)

The claim that, in impersonal constructions, the subject is suppressed and not deleted is supported by the fact that the suppressed subject can take part in syntactic control or raising or serve as an antecedent for reflexive pronouns, which is impossible for the deleted subject of a passive (Blevins 2003, Kibort 2004, Kaiser and Vihman 2007). These functions are illustrated by the Polish example in (22) and the Estonian example in (23) in which the reflexive pronouns refer to the suppressed subject of the impersonal:

(22) Oglądano   swoje   zbiory.
      looked-at.IMPERS   own[REFL].NONVIR.ACC   collections(NONVIR).ACC
      'One looked at one's collection./They looked at their collection.' (Kibort 2004: 50)

(23) ... lüüakse   kõigele   käega   ning   süüakse   ennast
      strike.IMPERS.PRS   all.ALL   hand.COM   and   eat.IMPERS.PRS   self.PAR
      tagasi   oma   esialgsesse   kaalu...[24]
      back   own   previous.ILL   weight.ILL
      '... one completely throws in the towel and eats oneself back to the previous weight ...'

Impersonals allow a greater variety of verbs as input than passives. Transitive as well as intransitive verbs can be impersonalised, resulting in subjectless constructions. In this respect, impersonalization resembles the passivization of intransitives, which also yields a subjectless form. Yet, as mentioned above, the two processes differ with respect to detransitivization: the passivization of intransitives results in a nontransitive clause while impersonalization maintains transitivity.

 A similarly powerful contrast between passives and impersonals is demonstrated by unaccusative verbs. As discussed in section 2.1.5., unaccusative verbs do not passivise, plausibly because passivization targets logical subjects, which unaccusative verbs do not have. At the same time, unaccusatives do not resist

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[24] http://www.kaalustalla.ee/blogi/petupaev/

impersonalization (Torn 2002, Blevins 2003, Kibort 2004). The impersonalization of unaccusatives is illustrated by the Estonian verb *surema* 'die' in (24) and the Irish verb *bí* 'be' in (25):

(24) *Surdi   ära   eeskätt sellepärast, et   langeti*
      die.IMPERS.PST off   mainly   because   that   fall.IMPERS.PST
      masendusse   ja   oldi   ükskõiksed.[25]
      depression.ILL   and   be.IMPERS.PST   indifferent.NOM.PL
      'One died primarily because one became depressed and was indifferent.'

(25) *Táthar   cairdiúil   anseo.*
      is.IMPERS   friendly   here
      'They/People are friendly here.'   (Noonan 1994: 288)

Further evidence that reinforces the morphosyntactic difference between impersonals and passives comes from the existence of impersonalised passives as opposed to passives of impersonals. Personal passives can be impersonalised because they are derived intransitives. Impersonals, however, cannot be passivised: they are subjectless constructions and thus cannot feed passivization, which is a process that targets subjects. In several languages, including Polish, Irish, and Estonian, passives can be impersonalised. This is illustrated by the Irish example in (26) where (26b) is the impersonal of the passive in (26a). The active auxiliary *bhí* in (26a) is replaced by the autonomous form *bhíothas* in (26b).

(26) a. *Bhí   Tomás   á bhualadh   ag   Seosamh.*
      was   Thomas   to+his hit.VN   at   Joseph
      'Thomas was being hit by Joseph.'

    b. *Bhíothas   á bhualadh   ag   Seosamh.*
      was.IMPERS   to+his hit.VN   at   Joseph
      'One [generic] got hit by Joseph.'   (Noonan 1994: 289)

2.2.2. Interpretations of impersonal voice constructions

As with subjectless passives, the suppressed argument of the impersonal is usually associated with a human agent. The same interpretation actually also applies to the German *man*, French *on* or Italian *uno* constructions, which are usually not interpreted as passive constructions. As Blevins (2003: 475) notes: "the implication of human agency does not reflect a grammatical feature of

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[25] http://www.folklore.ee/tagused/nr27/kippar.htm

impersonal constructions, but rather a default interpretation assigned to sub-jectless forms of personal verbs." Languages, however, differ in the degree to which they require the feature [+human] in impersonal arguments. For instance, while the Polish *-no/-to* impersonal can only be used to describe situations or events involving human activity (Kibort 2004), in Welsh or Estonian the feature [+human] can be overridden in metaphorisation or the anthropomorphisation of a non-human referent. In (27) the Estonian impersonalised verb *haugutakse* can-not be used to evoke a neutral context associated with a dog yet might be used metaphorically to refer to someone yapping.

(27) *Õues   haugutakse.*
       outside   bark.IMPERS.PRS
       'One is barking/yapping outside.'   (Torn 2002: 95)

Moreover, Vihman (2004) notes that the feature [+agentive] associated with the feature [+human] of the impersonal argument is more easily overridden than the latter. Agentivity can be overridden when the verbal semantics are non-agentive as illustrated by example (28).

(28) *tehakse   kogemata   haiget*
       do.IMPERS.PRS   by-accident   hurt.PAR
       'people hurt one another by mistake'   (Vihman 2004: 72)

The suppressed impersonal argument typically refers to a generalised referent, giving the impersonal an indefinite reading. The impersonal often implies a plural actor, triggering plural agreement with noun phrases that refer to the suppressed impersonal argument referent. For instance, Shore (1988), analysing the Finnish impersonal, provides two prototypical interpretations. According to Prototype I, Shore (1988:162) claims that the implicit argument of the Finnish impersonal has a generalised exophoric referent, implying the existence of at least one actor. This kind of usage is comparable to the English use of the indefinite pronoun *they*. Shore maintains that there is no theme in these clauses but only a rheme. Such clauses tend to be verb-initial and present a process. The scope of the indefinite actor referent can be delimited by location or temporal adverbs.

(29) *Puhuttiin   suomalaisen   muotoilun   kriisistä.*
       spoke.IND[26]   Finnish   design's   crisis-of/from
       'They/We/You [people in general] talked about the crisis in Finnish design.'
       or 'There was talk about the crisis in Finnish design.'   (Shore 1988: 162)

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[26] Shore (1988) calles the form *puhuttiin* indefinite and uses the gloss IND.

In the case of the Prototype II, the indefinite actor refers to a specific person or a specific group of people who perform the action but the identity of this actor is left unspecified. In this case, the actor does not have generalised exophoric reference. This is illustrated in (30).

(30) *Elokuvateatterissa   esitetään   kello 20   Ruusun nimi.*
      cinema.INE   present.IND   clock 20   Rose's   Name
      'The cinema will be showing "The Name of the Rose" at 8 o'clock.'

                                                            (Shore 1988: 167)

Shore notes that while Prototype I implies more than one participant, the number of participants in the case of Prototype II is irrelevant.

Agentive obliques tend to be much less acceptable in impersonal constructions than in passives and are judged fully unacceptable in some languages. This can be explained by the fact that the actor argument is less demoted in impersonals than in passives and is semantically present (Vihman 2004). For instance, Polish impersonals do not allow the use of agentive obliques at all, whereas in Welsh (King 2003) or Estonian (Torn 2006b) agentive obliques are possible in impersonals, although their use is often constrained. For instance, agentive obliques can occur only with transitive verbs and the oblique usually refers to a group of people or someone in authority. This is illustrated by the Welsh example in (31).

(31) *Arestiwyd   y   protestwyr gan   yr   heddlu.*[27]
      arrest.PST.IMPERS   the   protesters   by   the police
      'The protesters were arrested by the police.'

2.2.3. Functions of impersonal voice constructions

Probably the main reason for the frequent misclassification of impersonal voice constructions as passives is their similarity of communicative functions. Both constructions target subjects and their main function is agent defocusing/impersonalization (to use the classification of functions by Shibatani and Givón). As is the case with passives, the impersonal voice is used when the speaker/writer wants to leave the actor unspecified because it is unknown (32) or irrelevant in the context as in (33).

(32) *Turul   müüdi   värsket   lesta.*
      market.ADE   sell.IMPERS.PST fresh.PAR   sole fish
      'One sold fresh sole fish at the market.'

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[27] The example was provided by Prof. David Willis.

(33) *Kas   kohvi   ka   soovitakse?*
     Q   coffee.PAR also   wish.IMPERS.PRS
     'Does anyone also wish coffee?'

As discussed in 2.2.2., the implicit argument of the impersonal refers to a gener-alised referent. Impersonalization often brings about predicate generalisation; that is, the impersonal is frequently used to describe general or habitual situations, as in (34).

(34) *Supi   juurde süüakse   leiba.*
     soup.GEN   to   eat.IMPERS.PRS bread.PAR
     'One eats bread with soup.'   (Erelt et al 1993: 31)

Object topicalization, most common to personal passives, is not so prominent in the case of impersonals and is often language dependent. In languages such as Polish and Estonian, objects in the transitive impersonal retain their object case and are not necessarily topicalised. Instead there usually is some other topicalised element, such as an adverbial, that appears in the preverbal position, as in the Estonian examples (32) and (34) above.

　　Moreover, impersonal constructions may have other, more specific, functions in particular languages or even in written and spoken language registers. For instance, Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010 (Article V here), studying the use of the Estonian impersonals in spoken language, show that impersonal constructions in spoken Estonian can also be used to refer to specific or clearly identifiable referents. In such cases, the impersonal is not used to either mask the agent or generalise its referent, but may have various other motivations, from that of echoing (repeating an impersonal construction used earlier in the discourse) to politeness and stylistic considerations (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010; see also Hakulinen 1987).

2.3. Summary

Table 1 below summarises the properties of passives and impersonals. The com-parison of the properties of passives and impersonals shows that the two voice constructions exhibit different morphosyntactic properties. Although the con-structions may resemble each other in certain formal, semantic and functional respects, the morphosyntactic differences will always be there to distinguish one from the other.

Table 1. Properties of passives and impersonals

			PASSIVES		IMPERSONALS
			Personal	Subjectless	
TYPES OF VERBS AS INPUT	Transitive		√	—	√
	Intransitive	Unergative	—	√	√
		Unaccusative	—	—	√
VALENCY			reduced	reduced	maintained
THE REFERENT OF THE DEMOTED ARGUMENT			no restrictions	human reference	human reference
USE OF AGENTIVE OBLIQUES			possible, language dependent	possible, language dependent	possible with transitives, language dependent
FUNCTIONS	Agent defocusing		√	√	√
	Object topicalization		√	—	√, language dependent
	Detransitivization		√	√	—

3. THEORETICAL TREATMENTS OF VOICE

This section of the thesis summarises the treatment of voice in a representative group of formal grammatical theories. It mainly deals with the analysis of voice in generative frameworks, in Relational Grammar (RG) and in Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG). The description of passives has been central to all of them, yet they have not given much attention to impersonal constructions. The treatment of voice in constraint-based and construction grammar approaches will briefly be discussed in section 3.3.

In general, no standard formal theory recognises the impersonal as a distinct construction type. The situation can be explained by the fact that impersonal voice constructions are not well represented in the languages that have been studied most extensively in modern theoretical linguistics. This has led to three outcomes: a) theoretical approaches adopt particular principles that are inconsistent with impersonals; b) they explicitly assimilate impersonals to some other construction type (usually passives); c) they adapt devices that have been proposed for the description of other constructions (again usually, but not always, passives) to provide an account of impersonals, or some sub-type of impersonals.

Formal theories generally take one of two approaches: either they treat the opposition between the active and passive as a change in structural properties such as linearity and dominance, or they see the opposition as a relational one by emphasising the importance of grammatical relations. The first approach is most clearly advocated by proponents of generative grammar (following particularly Chomsky 1965, 1982, 1995). The second approach is developed by frameworks such as, notably, RG and LFG, that elaborate traditional treatments of valence and valence-changing operations.

3.1. Generative approaches to voice

Generative approaches view valence and argument structure configurationally and hence describe voice in configurational terms. The framework of Government and Binding (GB; Chomsky 1981, Baker, Johnson and Roberts 1989), and most later accounts adopt a promotional analysis of passivization. The use of passive morphology is assumed to have two effects: (i) a detransitivising effect, expressed in terms of the 'absorption' of an external (subject) theta role, and (ii) a promotional effect, triggered by the 'suppression' of the case-assigning properties of the verb. The suppression of object case features forces the internal argument to move elsewhere to receive case, and the absorption of the external theta role creates a position into which the object can move.

This analysis is implemented in the following way in GB accounts. The use of passive morphology on the verb absorbs its external theta role. As the passivised verb loses its ability to assign structural accusative case to its complement, the object has to move to the structural subject position [Spec, IP] to receive case.

The [Spec, IP] position is available in passive sentences because the external argument of the predicate is not assigned a theta role. Movement of the NP from the object to the subject position in passive sentences is obligatory because this is the only way that such NPs can pass the Case Filter, according to which all overt NPs must be assigned abstract case. Passivization, however, does not affect inherent case assignment, which means that object arguments receiving inherent cases, such as dative or genitive in German, maintain their case under passivization: passivization absorbs the external theta role and does not affect the internal theta role. It also does not affect the second NP complement in a 'double object' ditransitive construction.

An important generalisation that should be highlighted, since it is made across various theories and bears direct relevance to the analysis of impersonals, is that of a subject-licensing constraint. This constraint in principle requires that every predicate must have a subject. In GB it is called the Extended Projection Principle (the EPP; Chomsky 1982). The constraint is not a problem for personal passives as the active object is promoted to the subject position and the subject condition is thus satisfied. In the case of subjectless passives of the German or Dutch type, the use of a dummy is usually proposed, which would save the requirements of the subject condition. In the case of the German *es* 'it', it is unclear that the dummy in fact serves as a subject rather than as an element that preserves the V2 order, given that the 'dummy' *es* is not preserved in inversion structures where it does not support a V2 order. More generally, the EPP is inconsistent with impersonal constructions, given that they lack an overt subject.

Theory-driven approaches to impersonals, however, tend to assign different analyses to impersonal constructions in different languages. A good example is the Finnish construction in (35), which has received both passive and impersonal analyses. Shore (1988), Tommola (1993) and Blevins (2003)[28] analyse this construction as an (active) impersonal as opposed to a passive. In contrast, Nelson and Manninen (2004) as well as Hiietam and Manninen (2005) treat it as an example of a passive construction.

(35) *Suomessa   ollaan   niin   totisia.*
      Finland.INE be.IND   so   serious.
      'In Finland, we/they/people are so serious.'   (Shore 1988: 159)

Blevins (2003) in particular makes it clear that the Finnish construction morphosyntactically resembles impersonal constructions of Estonian, Polish and Welsh as it demonstrates "insensitivity to argument structure" (Blevins 2003: 486) and retains its object. In addition, like the corresponding constructions in other languages it also receives an active indefinite human interpretation. Nelson and

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[28] Shore uses the term 'indefinite', Tommola 'ambipersonal suppressive' and Blevins 'impersonal'.

Manninen (2004), however, strongly argue against Shore's and Blevins's impersonal analysis and claim that the Finnish construction is a true passive construction. They claim that the Finnish construction does not exhibit all of the characteristic properties proposed by Blevins (2003) and frame an alternative passive analysis within the Minimalist framework.[29] Nelson and Manninen (2004) propose that the Finnish construction is a true passive because it is 'passive in form'; it exhibits dedicated verbal morphology that differentiates it from actives (see section 2.1.). They proceed to claim that the arguments that are treated in other analyses as nominative objects are actually subjects and propose that this passive construction can take various classes of verbs including unaccusatives as its input.

While most linguists tend to agree that unaccusatives resist passivization, Nelson and Manninen claim that within the Minimalist approach unaccusatives can be seen to passivise. Hence, they maintain that the Finnish construction can be analysed as a passive, and one that can be formed from unaccusatives. Following Holmberg and Nikanne (2002), Nelson and Manninen consider Finnish a topic-prominent language where a topic is seen as an element that contains given information but is also referential, which means that locative and temporal adverbials can also appear as topics. Thus, in Minimalist terminology the promotion to subject or the [Spec,IP] position can be satisfied by any referential XP moving to [Spec,IP] position whether the XP is a patient NP, locative or temporal adverbial. The same claim is made with respect to Estonian impersonal constructions by Hiietam and Manninen (2005), who emphasise that both Estonian and Finnish first and foremost have a topic position, and so the promotion to [Spec,IP] can be filled by any grammatical constituent.

Nelson and Manninen's as well as Hiietam and Manninen's analyses of the Finnish and Estonian constructions are consistent with the theoretical frameworks that they assume. However, these theory-internal analyses do not really shed any light on the distinctive properties of the constructions that they consider, instead producing a classification that assimilates impersonals to passives, thereby obscuring the distinctive properties of each construction.

3.2. Relational analyses of voice: Relational Grammar and Lexical Functional Grammar

Relational Grammar (RG) retains the derivational perspective of transformational grammar, but takes a relational approach to passives and other valence-changing alternations. Perlmutter and Postal (1977, revised 1983) argue that a universal characterisation of passivization cannot be formulated in terms of word order, case or morphology, but must be stated in terms of changes in grammatical

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[29] It is important to note, however, that not all the properties are defining for Blevins.

relations. These relations are assumed primitive within RG, though this assumption is not critical to their analysis of the passive. The relational networks that represent the analysis of clauses consist of networks of stratified arcs, where the core or 'term' grammatical relations are numbered: subject 1, direct object 2 and indirect object 3. Passivization is expressed by the change of the initial subject 1 to chômeur (i.e. an oblique) and the initial object (2) to 1 on the second stratum. Figure 1 represents the corresponding relational networks of the active and passive sentence in (36). The active subject *Celia* (1) becomes a chômeur (Cho) in the passive and the active object *Ross* (2) becomes the final subject (1) in the passive.

(36) a. *Celia bit Ross.*
    b. *Ross was bitten by Celia.*

Figure 1. The relational networks of sentences in (36).

The laws regulating these changes that are most directly relevant to passives and impersonals are the Stratal Uniqueness Law, which states that there can be only one instance of a particular term relation in a given stratum, the Final 1 Law, which states that every basic clause contains a final stratum 1-arc (Perlmutter and Postal 1983), and the 1 Advancement Exclusiveness Law, which allows only one advancement to 1 in a clause (Perlmutter and Postal 1984).

In RG the Final 1 Law is a subject-mandating constraint, which requires the presence of subject. As in GB accounts, this subject requirement presents no problems for the analysis of personal passives. In their treatment of subjectless passives, Perlmutter and Postal (1984) pattern with generative accounts in proposing a dummy object in subjectless passives, which preserves the promotional analysis of passives and also satisfies the Final 1 Law. Yet, as argued by Comrie (1977), the refusal to reconsider the Final 1 Law and the Motivated Chômage Law, which states that subjects are only demoted due to something else being promoted to subject position, undermines the explanatory value of the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978), which would otherwise block passives of unaccusatives on the grounds that they lack an initial 1.

Unlike GB and RG, Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) is a monostratal theory. Like RG, it assigns syntactic functions a central role. LFG factors syntactic structure into two components, a constituent structure (c-structure), which represents the hierarchical structure and word order of clauses, and a functional structure (f-structure), which represents the abstract functional syntactic organisation of the sentence in terms of predicate-argument structure and functional relations like subject and object (Dalrymple 2001: 7). Within later models of LFG, Lexical Mapping Theory (LMT) provides a principled approach to argument structure, which regulates the mapping of a predicate's semantic arguments to f-structure functions. Argument structure (a-structure) is seen as an interface between the semantics and syntax of a predicate, that is, it encodes the thematic roles of the predicate ordered according to a thematic hierarchy and a syntactic classification of each role indicated by features (Bresnan 2001). The a-structure features [+/– restricted] and [+/– objective] constrain the mapping of thematic roles onto argument functions in f-structures, as in (37):

(37)

	$[-r(estricted)]$	$[+r(estricted)]$
$[-o(bjective)]$	SUB	OBL_θ
$[+o(bjective)]$	OBJ	OBJ_θ

The basic principles for determining the choice of syntactic features reflect the underlying lexical semantics of the roles: patientlike (directly affected) roles $\theta/[-r]$ are distinguished from secondary patientlike (more indirectly affected) roles $\theta/[+o]$, and both are contrasted with other (non-patientlike) semantic roles $\theta/[-o]$ (Bresnan 2001: 309). LMT provides mapping principles between a-structure and f-structure, according to which [–o] argument is mapped onto SUBJ when initial in the argument structure, otherwise it is a [–r] argument. Other roles are mapped onto the lowest (i.e., most marked) compatible function on the markedness hierarchy. The markedness hierarchy of grammatical functions reflects the status of grammatical functions, with negatively specified features indicating unmarked feature values. Thus, the least marked syntactic function is SUBJ and the most marked are thematically restricted objects. Two other principles that constrain the mapping are the Function-Argument Bi-uniqueness constraint which maintains that every a-structure role must be associated with a unique function, and the Subject Condition, which states that every predicator must have a subject (Bresnan 2001: 311).

In LFG, passivization is seen as a lexical relational change in predicate-function mapping, not a syntactic transformation. In the passive a-structure the logical subject is suppressed and the remaining role is mapped onto the subject function. LMT, like GB and RG, preserves a subject-mandating constraint in the form of the 'Subject Condition' repeated in Bresnan and Kanerva (1989). Following the mapping principles, the grammatical function assignment for the transitive active predicate *love* is represented in (38a) and that of the passivised verb *loved* in (38b).

(38) a. love < x   y>
              [–o] [–r]
               | |
              SUBJ OBJ

(38) b. loved <x   y>
                [–o] [–r]
                 ∅ |
                     SUBJ

The most detailed treatments of impersonals within LFG are in the work of Kibort (2004, 2006, 2008), who attempts to accommodate Polish impersonals (*-no/-to* constructions and reflexive impersonals) within the theory. As mentioned above, all versions of LFG retain a subject condition that requires every predicate to have a subject. Kibort (2004, 2006, 2008) claims that Polish *-no/-to* impersonals and reflexive impersonals, as illustrated in examples (39) and (40), are clear cases of active impersonals that are distinguished from passives by specific morpho-syntactic properties.

(39) *Budowano   szkołę.*
      built.IMPERS   school(FEM).ACC
      'A/The school was built. / [They] were building a/the school.' (Kibort 2008: 265)

(40)   *Budowało   się   szkołę.*
       built.3SG.NEUT   REFL   school(FEM).ACC
       'A/The school was built. / One was building a/the school.' (Kibort 2008: 270)

Like Estonian impersonals (see Torn 2002, Torn-Leesik 2009), these con-structions can be formed from different verb classes, they maintain their transi-tivity properties, and suppress the surface realisation of the subject, which can be interpreted as an unspecified or generic human agent or experiencer. Neither of the constructions allows the expression of an agentive oblique. Kibort (2006, 2008) claims that, despite these constructions being superficially subjectless, they seem to have a syntactically active 'covert' subject that participates in syntactic control and binding. Although in some accounts these constructions are analysed in terms of a phonetically empty pronoun *pro* (analogous to canonical personal pronouns in pro-drop languages; see references in Kibort 2006, 2008), Kibort analyses the covert subject of the *-no/-to* impersonal and reflexive impersonal as a pronominal anaphor analogous to the null, or shared, subject of non-finite clauses in syntactic control contexts (PRO). Kibort (2008) notes that the imper-sonal PRO differs from the pronominal anaphor of non-finite clauses in that it is finite and not syntactically controlled.

    The analyses proposed by Kibort show that LFG's Subject Condition (and the similar conditions assumed in GB and RG) creates problems for the analysis of predicates that do not have subjects at a-structure or at f-structure and c-structure and such a condition "should be eschewed" (Kibort 2008: 284). This group of verbs includes a small class of defective (non-inflecting) verbs, and passives of

intransitive verbs. The same was also noted by Dalrymple (2001: 19) who remarked in connection with the problems raised by subject-mandating constraints, "It may be, then, that the Subject Condition is a language-particular requirement imposed by some but not all languages, rather than a universal requirement."

3.3. Constraint-based and construction grammars

An alternative to the formal theories discussed above could be other theories that do not adopt a strong subject-mandating constraint; however, many of these theories are simply agnostic and also do not explicitly consider the possibility of impersonal constructions. For instance, models of Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG; e.g., Pollard and Sag 1994) are possible candidates for analysing impersonal constructions as they merely require that there can be at most one subject, expressed as the constraint that the value of the SUBJ feature is either a singleton list or an empty list. Blevins (2003) outlines an analysis of impersonals within the framework of HPSG that shows that impersonals are compatible with the general principles of HPSG but also that HPSG provides no particular insight into the properties of impersonals or their relation to other constructions.

Role and Reference Grammar (RRG; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997), which assumes that universal properties of language are semantic in nature, likewise questions the cross-linguistic validity of traditional grammatical relations such as 'subject', 'direct object' and 'indirect object'. It adopts a construction-specific conception of grammatical relations by proposing a single grammatical relation called the 'privileged syntactic argument', which is identified for each construction in terms of ACTOR and UNDERGOER macroroles, generalising over a rich inventory of participant roles. In RRG, the passive is defined in terms of the hierarchy of privileged syntactic argument selection. There are two features of passivization, which can occur separately or together. The first is the privileged syntactic argument modulation voice which allows a non-default argument to function as the privileged syntactic argument. The second is the argument modulation voice which gives non-canonical realisation to a macrorole argument (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 294–295, 302). Impersonal constructions are not really discussed in Van Valin and LaPolla (1997). There is a comment on passives of intransitives which illustrate only the feature of the argument modulation. As intransitives only have one argument, there is no second argument to function as the privileged syntactic argument (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 295).

Models of Construction Grammar (e.g., Goldberg 2005) may also provide an alternative to formal analyses of voice constructions, because constraints such as 'subject condition' are not primitive in such a model but constitute generalisations over attested construction types. Consequently, a subjectless construction type can form part of the grammar of a language, and can be associated with the selection of unergative verbs with human logical subjects. Moreover, the basic

idea of construction grammar – that a construction is not the sum of its parts but exhibits a particular association between its properties and forms – is a good way to accommodate different constructions formed of similar parts, such as Estonian periphrastic impersonals and personal passives (see Article III). Approaches like Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001) are even more open to the recognition of significant cross-linguistic variation at the level of constructions and construction inventories.

However, the descriptive flexibility of these approaches has yet to be exploited fully in the domain of voice constructions. Impersonal voice constructions are not among the constructions that have attracted attention within these research communities, and the term 'impersonal' is mostly applied either to meteorological verbs and other semantically nontransitive predicates, or to subjectless passives. Hence, although more construction-based approaches are suitable in principle to the analysis of impersonal constructions and may ultimately provide the basis for typologically better-informed studies, these approaches have not yet devoted significant attention to the challenge of distinguishing impersonals from the more familiar types of voice constructions.

3.4. Concluding remarks

The discussion above indicates that contemporary formal theories have, to a considerable degree, been designed to describe prototypical passive constructions and, hence, tend to encounter serious challenges when attempting to describe impersonal and other subjectless constructions. The principles laid out in the theories of these prototypical passive constructions are often based on a skewed sample of languages (mainly Western European languages). Extending principles that reflect the properties of that sample to other language types (e.g., Balto-Finnic or even Celtic) leads to descriptions that may not adequately capture the significant syntactic features of those languages. Moreover, the 'universal' principles based on this narrow sample guide the analysis of other languages and constructions in ways that tend to protect the original generalisation from counter-examples that might otherwise help to distinguish language- or family-bound patterns from valid universals. A strong subject condition, present in all the formal theories discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2., clearly excludes impersonals in principle, an effect that reduces both the descriptive scope and the kinds of theoretical insights available to these approaches.

There are of course richer typological descriptions of voice, though these tend not to be incorporated into any formal syntactic framework. As seen above, current formal theories accommodate impersonals mainly by assimilating them to passives or to some other construction type. By doing so, these accounts not only obscure the distinctive properties of impersonals, but also subvert the treatment of passives, since the passive macro-construction now confounds the description

of how properties cluster in two separate subconstructions (i.e., the human-sensitivity and verb class-insensitivity of impersonals vs the verb class-sensitivity and human-insensitivity of passives). Assembling an analysis out of components of the analyses of other constructions does not result in a useful outcome either: it may be possible to represent the individual properties but the resulting analysis provides no account of why those particular properties cluster together in this particular construction.

In a way, this outcome reflects the degree to which contemporary grammatical theories fall within a common intellectual tradition, rooted in transformational and, ultimately, structuralist approaches to syntax. Generative models such as GB or Minimalism are direct descendants of transformational approaches. RG is a transformational offshoot that consolidated some of the insights of traditional grammar while retaining generative conceptions of multiple representations, related derivationally. Constraint-based models are in large part a reaction to generative models, but retain many of the assumptions about the nature of formal analysis and syntactic representation set out in early transformational work. Because impersonal constructions were poorly represented in the languages that received the most attention during the transformational period, they were not recognised as independent constructions. As theory development within generative approaches came to focus more on restricting theories rather than on expanding their coverage, impersonals tended either to be ignored or assimilated to an existing construction type.

Hence one general conclusion that can be drawn from this thesis is that premature theoretical commitments to 'universals' or 'wellformedness principles' may prove counterproductive, particularly when they are based on a small and unbalanced sample of languages. Rather than making a theory more 'falsifiable', these kinds of universals and principles do not typically lead to falsification but instead create obstacles to describing the attested variation in syntactic strategies in the world's languages, by biasing descriptions and analyses towards more familiar constructions and patterns. The status of the impersonal in syntactic theory provides a clear example of this tendency.

4. THE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY OF VOICE IN ESTONIAN: EARLIER APPROACHES TO VOICE IN ESTONIAN

The present section presents a short overview of earlier treatments of voice in Estonian to highlight the main tendencies and outcomes of previous studies and to sketch the context for the thesis at hand. The overview is divided into three periods: the 19th century and the early 20th century, the late 20th century, and recent treatments. Although logically part of the third period, a detailed discussion of the contributions made by the thesis at hand is deferred to section 5.

4.1. Voice in grammars from the 19th to the early 20th century

Grammars from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century (e.g., Hupel 1818, Wiedemann 1875, Hermann 1884, Põld 1923, Kettunen 1924[30]) all classify the impersonal as a passive. With respect to the personal passive, the authors' opinions differ: some grammarians (e.g., Hupel 1818, Hermann 1884, Wiedemann 1875) treat it as part of the verbal paradigm, while others approach it as a copular construction with a predicative adjective (Ahrens 1853, Ploompuu 1923, Kettunen 1924). It is highly likely that this general classification of the impersonal as a passive reflects the terminological influence of German grammars. Most of these early grammars describe the formation and meaning of the corresponding Estonian constructions but do not specify the constraints that apply to them.

"A list of Estonian grammar terms" (Saareste ed. 1925) compiled by the working group for Estonian language teaching at the Academic Estonian Mother Tongue Society (*Akadeemiline Emakeele Selts*) includes the term 'impersonal voice' (*umbisikuline tegumood*). The list treats the impersonal voice as an active voice construction, while the passive is not considered as an independent form at all (Saareste ed. 1925: 26). Afterwards, the term 'impersonal voice' was adopted by Muuk (1927), Muuk and Mihkla (1935), Muuk and Tedre (1936) and, as Rajandi notes (1999 [1968]), in school grammars published subsequently. Yet not all Estonian linguists agree with it. For instance, Aavik (1936: 410) criticises the term as applied to verb forms such as *kirjutatakse* 'one writes / they/people write', *kirjutati* 'one/they/people wrote' because, according to him, these forms also have a passive meaning. He notes (1936: 410) that, in relation to such constructions, the original term 'passive' was replaced by the term 'impersonal'

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[30] For instance, Kettunen (1924: 18) uses the term 'impersonal' to refer to verbs such as 'rain', 'haunt', 'snow', etc., where the subject often refers to some non-human creature or natural force. Moreover, he notes that there are fewer impersonal verbs in Estonian than in some cognate languages.

because of its similarity to the German construction *man schreibt*, which is also impersonal in its meaning, and on account of the fact that the Estonian construction can take an object (*seda kirja kirjutatakse* 'one is writing this letter'), which would not be possible if it were a true passive. Aavik suggests using the term 'passive-impersonal' to cover both aspects of the meaning that the construction may invoke.[31] He claims that the passive meaning is realised when an agentive adverbial is used (*Kristust kiusati kuradist* 'Christ was tempted by the devil') and in the case of periphrastic forms with a nominative patient argument *(need raamatud olid kirjutatud* 'these books had been written'). In addition, Aavik states that the *-tud* participle is always passive.

4.2. Approaches to voice in Estonian in the late 20th century

Differing views concerning the classification of impersonals and passives appear also in the treatments of voice published in the late 20th century. For instance, while Rajandi (1999 [1968]), Mihkla et al (1974), Erelt (1979), Mihkla and Valmis (1979), and Pihlak (1993) consider impersonals and passives to be two separate constructions, a number of modern grammars of Estonian (Tauli 1972, Erelt 1986, Erelt 1989, Erelt et al 1993, Erelt, Erelt and Ross 2000) treat the impersonal as a sub-construction of the passive, and classify it as an 'impersonal' or 'subjectless' passive. The two different approaches are best described by reference to Erelt et al (1993) on the one hand and Rajandi (1999 [1968]) and Pihlak (1993) on the other.

The view that the impersonal is a subjectless passive construction is adopted in Erelt et al (1993), a grammar that has considerable influence as the academic reference for Estonian. For instance, Erelt et al (1993: 30) state, "The treatment of subjectless constructions as a sub-type of the passive is based on the assumption that voice alternation first and foremost takes place in order to avoid giving prominence to the actor, and the shift of perspective to the viewpoint of the patient argument should be regarded as merely a side effect of this alternation"[32] (translation by RTL). This explanation reflects a functional analysis of the impersonal voice − the construction is treated as passive based on its agent defocusing

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[31] In a later study, Kont (1963) also admits the dual nature of the impersonal in Balto-Finnic and calls it 'impersonal passive'. According to him, the dual nature of the construction is reflected in the fact that its object does not become a true subject but retains object properties and the partial-total object alternation (Kont 1963: 153). In his analysis, the personal passive is classified as a passive or predicative construction.

[32] *Subjektita konstruktsiooni käsitlemine passiivi alaliigina rajaneb eeldusel, et tegumoevahetus põhineb eelkõige püüdel vältida mingitel kaalutlustel tegija esiletõstmist ning tegevuse vaatlemine tegevusobjekti aspektist on pigem selle vahetuse võimalikke kaasnähtusi.*

function.[33] The personal passive in Estonian is described by Erelt et al (1993: 30) as passive adjectivization or stative passive, and analysed as a predicative construction. Erelt et al do not treat passive adjectivization as a syntactic process which merely changes the pragmatic orientation of the sentence and leaves its propositional content unaffected (as is the case in English) – in their approach, it changes the semantic roles in the sentence. The personal passive is realised by the verb *olema* 'be' + the *tud*-participle as illustrated in (41):

(41) *Ta   on   üllatatud.*
      3SG   be.3.PRS   surprise.PPP
      'S/he is surprised.'   (Erelt et al 1993: 30)

Erelt et al (1993: 31) state that the passive with a subject (*subjektiline passiiv*) is only realised by the verb *saama* 'get' and the *da*-infinitive, as illustrated in example (42). Erelt (2013) calls it the dynamic passive. However, it should be noted that unlike the stative *olema* 'be' passive, the dynamic *saama* passive significantly constrains the choice of the main verb, which typically expresses emotional or physical suffering that the patient argument experiences as a result of the action performed by the actor argument (e.g., *noomima* 'reprimand', *riidlema* 'tell off', *sõimama* 'call someone names', *tapma* 'kill').

(42) *Patsiendid   said   arsti   käest   noomida.*
      patient.PL.NOM   get.PST.3PL   doctor.GEN   from   reprimand.INF
      'Patients got reprimanded by the doctor.'   (Erelt et al 1993: 31)

Contrary to the approach taken in Erelt et al (1993), Rajandi (1999 [1968]) and Pihlak (1993), who provide the two most thorough earlier treatments of Estonian voice, sharply distinguish the impersonal from the passive. Rajandi (1999 [1968]), approaching the Estonian voice constructions in the framework of transformational grammar, characterises the impersonal as an active, dynamic construction that is in opposition to active personals (Rajandi 1999 [1968]: 106). In his analysis, the passive is characterised as passive adjectivization; yet, unlike many traditional grammars, Rajandi treats the passive construction, consisting of a form of *olema* and the *tud*-participle, as part of the verbal paradigm and not as a predicative construction. Rajandi admits that participles have adjectival features (e.g., the attributive function, degrees of comparison) but suggests that passive adjectivization means that participles have both verbal and adjectival features and

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[33] The fact that Erelt et al's (1993: 30–31) classification of the impersonal voice is a functional one is also clearly reflected by their statement that in addition to the impersonal passive (e.g., *magatakse* 'one sleeps / they/people sleep', *magati* 'one/they/people slept') the subjectless passive (*subjektita passiiv*) can be realised morphologically in the predicate in the case of a 3pl verb form or a 3sg verb form.

verbs differ in regard to the number of adjectival features that they take (Rajandi 1999 [1968]: 98). Rajandi does not treat adjectivization as a diachronic process but sees it as a synchronic, systematic change that certain verbs undergo (Rajandi 1999 [1968]: 97). Drawing a clear distinction between impersonals and passives, Rajandi contrasts passives with active personals instead of impersonals and emphasises that impersonals and passives cannot be grouped together under the heading 'passive' (1999 [1968]: 107).

Rajandi also outlines the main differences between the two constructions. He notes that impersonals can be formed of intransitive as well as transitive verbs while passives can only be formed of transitives. Rajandi claims that although impersonal constructions lack a lexical subject, the missing subject is nevertheless constrained by the feature [+animate], which is expressed in the verb form (1999 [1968]: 65). He does not emphasise the feature [+human], which is characteristic of impersonals in many languages. Moreover, according to Rajandi, both impersonal transitives and passives allow the use of agentive adverbials, which, in the case of impersonals, can be a *poolt* 'by' construction or an agentive noun in the elative, and in the case of passives, also an agentive noun in the adessive. For Rajandi, the constructional overlap between impersonal periphrastic forms and passive forms does not warrant the treatment of impersonals and passives as a single category.

Pihlak (1993) provides a comparative analysis of Estonian and Finnish voice constructions. One of the first things that he discusses in his study is the inadequacy of the term 'impersonal' in general. Following the Finnish linguist Tommola (1993), he prefers the term 'ambipersonal', which, as both authors argue, provides a better description of the non-specifying nature of the impersonal. Moreover, following Mel'čuk (1991), Pihlak as well as Tommola adopt the term 'suppressive' to describe voice constructions in which the actor argument is suppressed without promoting the patient argument to the subject position. Thus, Pihlak (1993) identifies five distinct voice constructions in Estonian: the Dynamic *saama* 'get' Passive (43), the Static Passive (44), the Dynamic Suppressive (45), the Static Suppressive (46), and the Dynamic *saama* Suppressive (47).

(43) Õpilane   sai   õpetajalt   noomida.
     pupil.NOM   get.PST.3SG   teacher.ABL   reprimand.INF
     'The pupil was reprimanded by the teacher.'

(44) Ma   olin   petetud   tema   poolt.
     1SG   be.PST.1SG   deceive.PPP   3SG.GEN   by
     'I was deceived by him.'

(45) Mind   peteti   tema   poolt.
     1SG.PAR   deceive.IMPERS.PST   3SG.GEN   by
     'There was deceiving me by him.'

(46)   *Ollakse   valitsuse   poolt petetud   ja   paljaks   tehtud.*
        be.IMPERS.PRS govenment.GEN by   deceive.PPP and naked.TRAN make.PPP
        'One is deceived and robbed blind by the government.'

(47)   *Saadakse   ema   käest   nüpeldada.*
        get.IMPERS.PRS mother.GEN   from   flog.INF
        'One is flogged by one's mother.' (examples from Pihlak 1993: 37ff, glosses by RTL)

Pihlak (1993: 91) argues that the main opposition in the Estonian voice system is between the active and suppressive and not between the active and passive. He maintains that the suppressive (i.e., impersonal) is distinct from the passive in that "it involves suppression of the grammatical Subject, and does not involve any conversion of the semantic Object into the grammatical Subject" (1993: 91). He points out that the suppressive is always dynamic while the passive in Estonian is static, and that the suppressive has synthetic present and past tense forms while the passive in Estonian is always analytical; moreover, he mentions that static passives can be turned into static suppressives. Similarly to Rajandi, Pihlak regards the suppressive (the impersonal) as a core category of the Estonian voice system.

4.3. Recent treatments of voice in Estonian

Most of the recent treatments of Estonian voice constructions (Torn 2002, Blevins 2003, Erelt 2003, Vihman 2004, Torn 2006a, 2006b, Lindström and Tragel 2007[34], Torn-Leesik 2007, Torn-Leesik 2009, Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010, Erelt 2013) consider the impersonal and the passive to be separate constructions, thus extending the approach already taken by Rajandi (1999 [1968]) and Pihlak (1993). Treating Estonian impersonal and passive voice constructions as distinct ones may partly reflect the general rise of interest among linguists in voice constructions and, in particular, in the impersonal constructions in various languages. Moreover, a number of recent treatments of voice have focused on specific aspects of the two voice constructions such as, for instance, their interaction with modals (Torn-Leesik 2007), the semantic roles of their adessive arguments (Lindström and Tragel 2007), or the degree of demotedness of the implicit argument in the impersonal (Vihman 2004).

   Of these recent studies on Estonian voice constructions, Torn (2002), comparing Estonian and English voice constructions, is the first one to use the Unaccusative Hypothesis to highlight the difference between Estonian impersonals and the personal and subjectless passives of other languages. She shows that unaccusative verbs submit to impersonalization in Estonian without difficulty. She

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[34] Lindström and Tragel (2007) do not distinguish between stative passives and periphrastic impersonals with total objects.

also emphasises the constraint of the feature [+human] on the implicit actor argument in the impersonal. Where the implicit actor argument refers to an entity other than a human being, it often involves personification or refers to natural forces (see also Torn-Leesik 2009: Article I below).

A contrastive identification of the salient features of impersonals and passives is provided by Blevins (2003) on the basis of cross-linguistic data from different language families (Balto-Finnic, Balto-Slavic, Celtic). Blevins (2003: 481) treats passive constructions as a "morphosyntactic class, defined in terms of their argument structure, not their meaning, function, use, or morphotactic properties." He maintains that there can be no language that permits unaccusative and transitive passives because passivization targets the logical subjects and is a valence changing process, whereas impersonalization is a valence-maintaining process.

Vihman (2004) provides an analysis of valency reducing constructions in Estonian in the framework of Role and Reference Grammar. Besides looking at anticausatives and generic apersonals, she also analyses impersonals and passives. Similarly to Torn (2002) and Blevins (2003), she treats Estonian impersonals and passives as separate constructions. Vihman maintains that the impersonal and the passive differ in their degree of demotion, the latter exhibiting a higher degree of demotion of the actor, which allows the promotion of the undergoer. Vihman (2004: 208) holds that whereas the passive is "a syntactic argument-linking operation", the impersonal is "a lexical operation which results in a predicate with particular semantic effects." In the impersonal construction, the actor argument is semantically present and the undergoer argument, if present, remains relatively unaffected; thus impersonalization leaves the argument structure intact (ibid.).

Vihman (2004) agrees with Torn (2002) that the feature [+human] is associated with the implicit impersonal argument. She also emphasises that the feature [+agentive], which is typically connected with the feature [+human], is easier to override than the requirement of a human referent. Agentivity can be overridden if the verbal semantics are non-agentive, as in (48).

(48) *Venemaal   surrakse   pidevalt.*
     Russia.ADE   die.IMPERS.PRS   constantly
     'In Russia, people are always dying.'   (Vihman 2004: 72)

Vihman (2004) also provides an analysis of the so-called impersonalised impersonals or doubly marked impersonals as illustrated in (49).

(49) *Hindamisjuhendit   oldi   korralikult jälgitud.*
     marking-guide.PAR   be.IMPERS.PST   properly   follow.PPP
     'The guide for marking was correctly followed.'   (Vihman 2004: 211)

Although the 'impersonalised impersonal' constructions of the type shown above have been regarded by some grammarians as incorrect usage (Aavik 1936, Pihlak 1993, Viitso 2005) or colloquial speech (Erelt 2003), Vihman claims that speakers of Estonian often judge the construction acceptable. The problem with the construction lies in the fact that there are too many expressed arguments for the number of argument positions. To solve this problem, Vihman (2004: 215ff) proposes an analysis according to which the impersonalised auxiliary is a form of verbal concord that has emerged as a result of semantic bleaching of the impersonal perfect. This semantic bleaching has been rendered possible because of the constructional overlap between the perfective impersonal and the passive (Vihman 2004: 229–230, Vihman 2007). Yet the impersonalised impersonal construction reintroduces the impersonal actor, realised in the impersonal affix. The affix functions as a kind of concord marker, emphasising or reinforcing the marking of impersonal voice on the main verb, similarly to the multiple marking in Lithuanian evidential impersonals (as discussed in Blevins 2003).

Lindström and Tragel (2007) study the semantic roles that are assigned to the adessive argument in the Estonian impersonal (50) and stative passive[35] (51).

(50) *meil*   *müüakse*   *kõige*   *rohkem* *Forde*   *ja*   *Oopeleid*
      1PL.ADE   sell.IMPERS.PRS most   plenty   Ford.PL.PAR and   Opel.PL.PAR
      'At our place/shop, Fords and Opels sell best.'

(51) *Meil*   *on*   *ülesanded*   *lahendatud.*
      1PL.ADE   be.3.PRS   task.PL.NOM   solve.PPP
      'Here the tasks have been solved.' / 'We've got the tasks solved.'
                                        (Lindström and Tragel 2007: 533, 538)

Their study shows that in the synthetic impersonals (as in (50)) the adessive argument is not an agent but rather a patient or a location, whereas in periphrastic impersonals, although the adessive argument may refer to an agent, it is not the prevalent role here either. The adessive nominal can also be a possessor or addressee. In the case of stative passives and periphrastic impersonals with total objects, however, the adessive argument is mostly interpreted as an agent or as a combined agent-possessor. Lindström and Tragel (2007) also note that the adessive argument very frequently occurs clause-initially, irrespective of the voice construction. Thus, in the case of transitive verbs there are two competing topics – the adessive argument and the patient. In impersonal constructions this does not create ambiguity, while in the case of passives one would assume that the patient argument would become the topic. Lindström and Tragel's analysis shows that the patient argument becomes a topic in passives more often than in synthetic or periphrastic impersonals. Yet in comparison to the adessive

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[35] Rajandi (1999 [1968]) does not list adessive marking on the agentive adverbial in the impersonal.

argument, the patient is a far less frequent topic. Moreover, Lindström and Tragel (2007, 2010) claim that the construction [NP$_{ADE}$ *olema* 'be' (NP) V$_{PPP}$], as illustrated in (52), which is usually treated in the passive paradigm (Rajandi 1999 [1968], Pihlak 1993, Erelt 2003), is not an impersonal or a passive construction but a possessive perfect one.

(52) *Mul   on   auto   pestud.*
     1SG.ADE   be.3.PRS   car.NOM   wash.PPP
     'My car is/has been washed' / 'I've washed the car.'

                                                (Lindström and Tragel 2010: 372)

Lindström and Tragel (2007: 550) note that the construction is used to express the perfectivity or completedness of the activity/event performed by the agent argument. In addition, it is the agent argument that is topicalised and not the patient. Unlike passives, this construction also allows intransitive verbs as its input.

    Erelt (2013) is the most recent overview of Estonian voice constructions. The overview distinguishes between impersonal and passive constructions and notes (2013: 196ff) that besides the morphological impersonal and the stative passive, Estonian has the periphrastic passive and impersonal constructions formed with the verb *saama* 'get'.[36] Erelt (2013) distinguishes between the stative *saama* passive, the dynamic *saama* passive (earlier referred to as 'passive with a subject', see example (42) above) and the *saama* 'get' impersonal. The resultative stative *saama* passive, which is formed with the verb *saama* and the *tud*-participle, differs from the stative passive formed with the auxiliary *olema* 'be' in that that the former expresses the reaching or not reaching of a state. The resultative stative *saama* passive is illustrated in (53).

(53) *Lauad   saavad   kaetud.*
     table.PL.NOM   get.PRS.3PL   lay.PPP
     'The tables will be set.'

According to Erelt (2013) the *saama* impersonal is formed with the 3sg form of *saama* and the -*tud* or -*da* infinitive, as illustrated in (54)–(55). In the former case it refers to the speaker without explicitly mentioning the speaker, while in the latter case, it usually expresses a modal meaning or a generic personal reference.

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[36] Interestingly, Aavik (1936: 84–85) considers the construction *saama + tud* participle and *saama + da*-infinitive as a phenomenon that is widespread in spoken language but that should be avoided. He regards it a German influence (*wird gemacht*), pointing out that the *saama* passive cannot be used with verbs such as *want, think, can*, whose German counterparts do not allow the *werden* passive either. In Estonian, however, these verbs do occur in impersonal constructions.

(54) *Täna   sai   kõvasti trenni   tehtud,   magatud   ka.*
today   get.PST.3SG hard   exercise.PAR do.PPP   sleep.PPP   also
'One had a hard work-out today, and some good sleep, too.'

(55) *..vähemalt   sai   mõelda   millestki   muust kui*
at-least   got.PST.3SG think.INF something   else   than
Miroslav   ja   surm
Miroslav   and   death
at least this allowed one to think of something apart Miroslav and death.' (Erelt 2013: 199)

Yet one can say that *saama* passives and the *saama* impersonal are more constrained in their use than the morphological impersonal and the stative passive formed with the auxiliary *olema* 'be'.

4.4. Concluding remarks

The overview shows that Estonian voice constructions have long inspired different analyses among linguists. The 19th century analysis of the impersonal as passive may have resulted from the influence of German grammars. Although Estonian linguists at the beginning of the 20th century held differing views on the nature and proper labelling of the construction, many preferred the term 'impersonal voice' and treated it as an active voice construction. In the late 20th century, although Rajandi (1999 [1968]) and Pihlak (1993) do not treat the impersonal voice as passive, the analysis of Estonian voice constructions is first and foremost influenced by the approach taken in the seminal academic reference grammar of Erelt et al (1993) which sees agent defocusing as the main function of both impersonals and passives and thus treats them as two subconstructions of the passive macro-construction. Compared to earlier grammars, recent studies of voice, however, appear to converge on the view that the two constructions are distinct. Moreover, they are also based on wider data sets and show a greater interest in different aspects of the two voice constructions. The present thesis, falling among the recent studies of voice, also takes the same position. In addition, it studies various properties of these constructions in greater detail (see section 5).

5. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRESENT THESIS TO THE STUDY OF VOICE IN ESTONIAN

The core of the present thesis consists of six articles, each of which concentrates on a specific aspect of the grammatical category of voice in Estonian that has not previously been studied in detail. The chief contributions of the thesis concern the following four areas: constraints on impersonalization and passivization in Estonian, the issue of constructional overlap between impersonal and passive constructions, the realisation and interpretation of the demoted argument in Estonian voice constructions, and the acquisition of voice by Estonian children.

5.1. Constraints on impersonalization and passivization in Estonian

Building on the tradition of Rajandi (1999 [1968]) and Pihlak (1993), the present thesis analyses impersonals and passives as different constructions and considers them to be members of two different voice oppositions. The thesis shows that the two voice constructions exhibit distinct lexical, semantic and morphosyntactic constraints (Article II: Torn-Leesik 2007, Article I: Torn-Leesik 2009). In the previous literature, as noted above, these constraints have not been clearly specified.

Lexical constraints are concerned with the choice of input verbs. Here, the first important constraint differentiating the two constructions concerns transitivity. In Estonian, passivization targets only transitive verbs while impersonalization is neutral in this respect and accepts both transitive and intransitive verbs as its input.

Secondly, the distinction is reinforced by the acceptance of unaccusative verbs as input in impersonal constructions. Torn (2002), as mentioned above, was the first to test the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978) on Estonian impersonal and passive constructions. As has been reported in the literature with respect to other languages (Perlmutter 1978, Blevins 2003, Kibort 2004), passivization targets logical subjects and is inapplicable to verbs that do not take a logical subject. Unergative verbs take logical subjects and are thus passivisable; unaccusative verbs, on the other hand, do not take logical subjects and fail to passivise. Unlike passives, impersonal constructions in Estonian are insensitive to such lexical constraints and allow both unergatives (e.g., *jooksma* 'run', *käima* 'walk', *magama* 'sleep') and unaccusatives (e.g., *olema* 'be', *jääma* 'remain', *surema* 'die') as their input. This is a clear indicator that impersonals and passives must be regarded as different constructions in Estonian as well.

Thirdly, lexical constraints are also illustrated by the interaction of voice and modality in Estonian, providing further support for the claim that impersonal constructions in Estonian are not a subcategory of the passive (Article II: Torn-Leesik 2007). It is known that modal verbs almost universally resist passivization

(Wurmbrand 1999) as they do not have the unergative argument structure for the personal or subjectless passive to be possible. Their participation in passive predicates is restricted to the taking of passive complements. The existence of impersonal forms of most modal elements in Estonian (e.g., *saadakse* 'one/they/people can', *saadi* 'one/they/people could', *võidakse* 'one/they/people can', *võidi* 'one/they/people could', for more details, see Article II), however, provides evidence of the Estonian impersonal functioning as an active rather than a passive construction. Modals in Estonian can take passive complements but cannot be passivised. This is illustrated by the modal verb *võima* 'can', which in (56) takes the passive complement *olla petetud* 'been deceived' but produces an ungrammatical sentence (57) when passivised.

(56) *Ta   võis   olla   sõprade   poolt   petetud.*
  3SG   may.PST.3SG   be.INF   friend.PL.GEN   by   deceive.PPP
  'He may have been deceived by his friends.'

(57) *∗Ta   oli   võidud   sõprade   poolt   petetud.*
  3SG   be.PST.3SG   may.PPP   friend.PL.GEN   by   deceive.PPP
  intended: 'He may have been deceived by his friends.'

The semantic constraint that differentiates passive and impersonal constructions is that of the feature [+human] that is assigned to the implicit argument referent of the impersonal. In earlier treatments of voice in Estonian this feature has not been emphasised; the focus has been on the feature [+animate] (see Rajandi 1999 [1968]). Attention was drawn to this characteristic of Estonian impersonals by Torn (2002), and later by Vihman (2004). The validity of the feature has been confirmed in the studies collected in the present thesis. Unlike impersonals, passives are not subject to this constraint, as seen in (58) where the implicit argument refers to inanimate entities such as 'Hollywood's glamour' (*Hollywoodi sära*) and 'false promises' (*valelubadused*).

(58) *Ja   mulle ei   meeldinud, kuidas mitmed animatsiooniinimesed*
  and 1SG.ALL   NEG   like.APP how   several   animation-people.NOM
  olid   pimestatud Hollywoodi   särast   ja   valelubadustest.[37]
  be.PST.3PL blind.PPP   Hollywood.GEN glamour.ELA and false-promise.PL.ELA
  'And I didn't like it that many animation people were blinded by Hollywood's
  glamour and false promises.'

Yet, when a passive construction is subjected to impersonalization, the constraint becomes operative, as shown in (59). The fact that the passive subject *raamatud*

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[37] http://www.temuki.ee/arhiiv/2003/01/03jaan_k06.htm

'books' in the example (59a) is an inanimate, non-human entity acts as a bar to impersonalization, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (59b).

(59) a. *Raamatud   olid   läbi   loetud.*
   book.PL.NOM   be.PST.3PL   through   read.PPP
   'The books were read through.'

  b. **Oldi   läbi   loetud.*
   be.IMPERS.PST   through   read.PPP

The morphosyntactic constraint that interacts with the lexical and semantic constraints is that impersonalization is only possible with verbs that take nominative subjects. This constraint can be clearly seen in the interaction of voice and modals. In Estonian, the modals that express necessity (e.g., *tarvitsema* 'need'*, pruukima* 'need'*, tulema* 'need') do not govern nominative subjects but code their actor arguments in the adessive and thus lack the corresponding impersonal forms. The constraint that prevents impersonalization in the case of constructions that lack nominative subjects is further corroborated by the behaviour of a subclass of necessity modals (*tarvitsema, pruukima* 'need') which do allow nominative subjects in negative contexts and, correspondingly, have negative impersonal forms. The morphosyntactic constraint described here interacts with the semantic constraint that requires a human actor argument for impersonalization. This is illustrated in example (60):

(60) *Iga   ürituse   puhul   olen   saatnud   Rahvale   ka*
   every event.GEN occasion.ADE be.PRS.1SG send.APP   people.ALL also

   kirjakese   koju,   et   nad   teaksid,   kusagile   pandud
   letter.DIM.GEN home.ILL that 3PL   know.COND.3PL somewhere   put.PPP

   kuulutust   ei   tarvitseta   märgatagi, Selgitab   ta.[38]
   advertisement.PAR no   need.IMPERS.INF   notice.INF   explain.PRS.3SG 3SG
   'In connection with every event I've sent people a little message to their home address to inform them – just another ad on a wall is more likely than not to go unnoticed' he explains.

The exact constraints on passivization in Estonian have not been studied in sufficient detail yet. Article I (Torn-Leesik 2009) raises the issue of the aspectual properties of transitive input verbs in the passive, which is elaborated on below. Estonian verbs are not marked for the grammatical category of aspect; however, aspectual distinctions of imperfectivity and perfectivity are expressed by different

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[38] http://www.valgamaalane.ee/2222375/kulalood-restu-kula-ei-ole-enam-valge-laik

object cases and by lexical means (Erelt 2003: 104). The most general classi-
fication of transitive verbs in Estonian divides such verbs into partitive and
aspectual ones (Erelt et al 1993: 49–50).[39] Partitive verbs require objects in the
partitive case and describe unbounded events. Aspectual verbs, which take
objects in the nominative, genitive and partitive cases, convey reference to a
bounded situation when their objects are in the nominative or genitive case
('total' object in the Estonian grammar tradition), but may also be used with
partitive objects to denote unboundedness. Linguists have claimed that both
partitive and aspectual verbs can be passivised (Rajandi 1999 [1968]), Mihkla
and Valmis 1979). However, as noted in Article I (Torn-Leesik 2009: 84) this
generalisation does not seem to apply to all verbs and needs more detailed study.
Still, certain tendencies can be outlined here.

Earlier studies (Zaenen 1993, Carnie and Harley 2005, Abraham and Leiss
2006) on the aspectuality of verbs that can be passivised in other languages show
that different types of passives exhibit different constraints on the aspectual class
of their input verbs. For instance, Abraham and Leiss (2006) claim that German
subjectless passives[40] can only be formed from imperfective predicates and for
this reason do not allow the use of perfective adjuncts. It is generally known that
dynamic personal passive and stative personal passive constructions show aspec-
tual differences. For instance, the German stative, the *Zustandspassiv*, is
restricted to perfective predicates only (Leiss 1992, cited in Abraham and Leiss
2006). Siewierska (1988: 247) also notes, for instance, that Russian "employs the
periphrastic personal passive exclusively with perfective verbs, while imperfec-
tive verbs occur in the reflexive passive."

Aspectual restrictions of the type that constrain the subjectless passive in
German do not apply to the Estonian impersonal constructions. As noted already,
the Estonian impersonal differs from the passive in many respects, including
aspectuality. Both imperfective and perfective predicates can be impersonalised
and the impersonal clause allows the use of durative or perfective adjuncts. The
personal passive, however, is a different matter. It is usually described as
resultative or stative and is in this sense very similar to the adjectival passive of
English (Bresnan 1982: 21) or the *Zustandspassiv* in German.

Whether or not aspectual restrictions apply to the Estonian personal passive
has not been discussed in the literature. Many linguists (e.g., Rajandi 1999[1968],
Mihkla et al 1974, Mihkla and Valmis 1979) claim that both partitive and aspec-
tual verbs can be passivised, in which case the active object is promoted to subject
position, receives nominative case and agrees with the auxiliary. Yet, if the Esto-
nian passive resembles the German *Zustandspassiv*, it should also be restricted to

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[39] Other linguists have proposed more elaborate versions of the traditional binary classification
(see Rätsep 1978, Tauli 1980, Klaas 1999, Vaiss 2004), where, for instance, partitive verbs
are divided into separate classes depending on whether the addition of a resultative modifier
is possible. For a lucid overview of these classifications, see Pool (2007: 28–36).
[40] They use the term 'impersonal passive'.

perfective predicates as Abraham and Leiss (2006) claim. This does not pose any problems in relation to the Estonian aspectual verbs, as these readily allow a resultative reading. On the other hand, it is not clear whether all partitive verbs, which usually have an imperfective reading, can be used in the personal passive – this still needs to be tested in detail.

Estonian verbs that allow object case alternations could also be described in terms of Vendler's *Aktionsart* classes (Vendler 1957 [1967]). Vendler's original Aktionsart classes constitute a classification of verbs according to their inherent temporal properties into states, activities, accomplishments and achievements (for a further elaboration of Vendler's classification, see Dowty 1979, Smith 1991, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). Although the *Aktionsart* or the lexical aspect of a clause in general depends on the coding of verbal arguments and can vary when different adverbials are used, verbs are considered to have an inherent *Aktionsart* class. States, expressed by stative verbs (e.g., *desire, love, hate, know, believe, own/have, stink, exist)* describe non-dynamic, static situations which are inherently temporally unbounded (atelic). States do not encode change, although they may result from a change-of-state event. Activities expressed by dynamic verbs (e.g., *run, swim, drive a car, eat ice cream, play the piano*) describe (atelic) dynamic events with temporal duration and no boundary. Achievements (e.g., *recognise, find, stop, start, win the race, explode*) and accomplishments (e.g. *run a mile, draw a circle, paint a picture, grow up, burn down*) express changes of state and are inherently temporally bounded (telic). They differ in that achievements are regarded as punctual, while accomplishments are durative. In addition, Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 100) propose an additional 'active accomplishment' class of predicates which express the telic use of activity verbs and are very often derivationally formed from activity verbs (e.g., *march to the park, eat the fish*). In Estonian, active accomplishments may be realised by nominative/genitive case marking on the object, which gives the activity verb a telic reading as illustrated in (61b) (see also Vihman 2004).

(61) a. *Mari   luges   raamatut.*   activity
        Mari.NOM   read.PST.3SG   book.PAR
        'Mari was reading a book.'

    b. *Mari   luges   raamatu   nädala   ajaga*
        Mari.NOM   read.PST.3SG   book.GEN   week.GEN   time.COM
        (läbi).   active accomplishment
        (through)
        'Mari read the book in a week.'

In her MA thesis Vaiss (2004)[41] discusses 'true' partitive verbs, which always take a partitive object and receive an imperfective interpretation. The verbs in this class would, according to the *Aktionsart* classification, mostly be treated as activities (e.g., *abistama* 'help', *anuma* 'beg', *arutlema* 'discuss', *hingama* 'breathe', *jorisema* 'drone', *keerutama* 'twirl', *naerma* 'laugh') or states (e.g., *lootma* 'hope', *eeldama* 'presume', *kogema* 'experience', *kuulma* 'hear', *kadestama* 'envy'). As pointed out above, states and activities are inherently unbounded and thus would not be compatible with the resultative personal passive, which implies boundedness. Hence, partitive verbs expressing activities are predicted to be unacceptable in personal passive. The author's intuition regarding this issue was confirmed by four other native speakers of Estonian.[42] Some example sentences which were judged unacceptable in the personal passive are given in (62). The past tense and the explicit subject-verb agreement (i.e., the plural subject in most cases) were intentionally used to make it plain that the sentence is passive, and not impersonal.

(62) a. ∗*Küsimused   olid   koosolekul   arutletud.*
        question.PL.NOM   be.PST.3PL   meeting.ADE   discuss.PPP
        intended: 'The questions were discussed at the meeting.'

    b. ∗*Hapnik   oli   (koosolijate   poolt) hingatud.*
        oxygen.NOM   be.PST.3SG company-of-people.GEN   by   breathe.PPP
        intended: 'Oxygen was breathed (by the people gathered together).'

Yet, the activity verbs listed above can be modified by an aspectual marker to give them an active accomplishment reading. Due to their bounded interpretation, these predicates would be compatible with the passive as illustrated in (63). Hence, the aspectual class seems to play a crucial role in determining the acceptability of passivization.

(63) a. *Küsimused   olid   koosolekul   läbi   arutletud.*
        question.PL.NOM   be.PST.3PL   meeting.ADE   through   discuss.PPP
        'The questions were discussed at the meeting.'

    b. *Hapnik   oli   (koosolijate   poolt) ära   hingatud.*
        oxygen.NOM   be.PST.3SG company-of-people.GEN   by   away   breathe.PPP
        'The oxygen was breathed up (by the people gathered together).'

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[41] Vaiss (2004) also distinguishes potentially aspectual verbs that in general require the partitive object although they may take the nominative/genitive object if perfective adverbials are added.
[42] Four other native speakers of Estonian were asked to give their judgments on 163 partitive verbs in the passive construction.

Stative verbs typically include verbs of perception, cognition and relational verbs. These are static throughout their duration and thus have no endpoint. Judgements about the acceptability of stative verbs in the passive vary; yet, it is not entirely clear how to draw a distinction between partitive verbs of states that seem to be acceptable in the personal passive and those that are not. While verbs such as *lootma* 'hope', *himustama* 'covet', *kuulma* 'hear', *kadestama* 'envy', *kahetsema* 'regret' were judged unacceptable in the personal passive by the author and the other informants, verbs such as *alahindama* 'underestimate', *armastama* 'love', *austama* 'honour', *ohustama* 'endanger' were deemed acceptable. Instances of some of these uses are illustrated in (64).

(64) a. *Kommid*   *olid*   *(laste*   *poolt)*   *himustatud.*
     bonbon.PL.NOM   be.PST.3PL   child.PL.EN   by   covet.PPP
     'The bonbons were coveted by the children.'

   b. *Lähenevad*   *sammud*   *olid*   *(taadi*   *poolt)*   *kuuldud.*
     approaching.PL   step.PL.NOM   be.PST.3PL   old-man.PL.GEN   by   hear.PPP
     'The approaching steps were heard by the old man.'

   c. *Tema*   *võimed*   *olid*   *alahinnatud.*
     3SG.GEN   ability.PL.NOM   be.PST.3PL   underestimate.PPP
     'His/her abilities were underestimated.'

The reason for this distinction seems to lie in the nature of the participial forms of these verbs, which exhibit more adjectival features than the participles of other verbs, as also noted in Rajandi (1999[1968]: 96–98). Some participles allow comparative degree (e.g. *piiratum* 'more constrained'), while others do not (e.g. **istutatum* '*more planted'). The less adjectival participles more readily allow the agentive phrase (*Pirnipuu on minu isa poolt istutatud* 'The pear tree has been planted by my father'). Rajandi (ibid.) considers the personal passive to be part of the verbal paradigm and the *-tud*-participle to be in the process of adjectivization, reflecting a frequently observed synchronic phenomenon. Thus, due to the fact that some participles resemble adjectives more than others do, a certain gradience must be conceded in determining the nature of the personal passive.[43]

Definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from this discussion yet, but some tendencies that require further research have been outlined. Thus, it seems that the constraints on passivization may have to do with the resultative passive relying on or requiring a telic verb. When the verb allows a telic reading, it is compatible with the meaning of the personal passive and thus acceptable in this voice

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[43] Erelt (2013: 196) mentions the non-resultative stative passive that is formed with verbs expressing mental states such as *love, hate, detest, fear, value*, etc. Here the state is not the result of an earlier activity or process but represents a stable condition.

construction. As to the partitive stative verbs, the acceptability of their passive constructions depends on the degree of adjectivization of the participle.

5.2. Constructional overlap between impersonal and passive constructions

Another aspect of Estonian voice constructions that has troubled linguists is the constructional overlap between the periphrastic impersonal forms and the personal passive, both of which use the auxiliary verb *olema* 'be' and the *-tud*-participle of the main verb. As seen in the discussion of earlier approaches to voice in Estonian, there has been no agreement on how to classify these two constructions built out of the same forms. In this respect, the thesis adopts a general construction-based approach (Goldberg 1995, Kay and Fillmore 1999) to describe how two different constructions can be formed of the identical components. One of the central tenets of construction-based approaches is that a construction is not seen as merely the sum of its parts but rather as an association between its form and function. In this perspective, two distinct constructions such as the Estonian impersonal and the Estonian personal passive may be formed using identical parts but exhibit different properties (see Article III: Torn 2006a).

In such an approach, the adjectival and verbal characteristics of the participle[44] could be accounted for by postulating verb paradigms that contain a single *-tud*-participle entry that is unspecified for features distinguishing verbs from adjectives. The present thesis describes the constructional overlap between Estonian periphrastic impersonals and personal passives by an HPSG-like entry description in which the *-tud*-participle receives different spell-out features: the impersonal construction spells out the features [PFV+, IMPERS+] by a form of *olema* and a verb phrase headed by a *tud*-participle while the passive construction spells out the feature [PASS+] by a form of *olema* and by a *tud*-participle. The unspecified *-tud*-participle is realised as a verb in impersonal constructions and has an adjectival nature in passive constructions.

5.3. The realisation and interpretation of the demoted argument

As noted above, one of the functions shared by impersonals and passives involves defocusing the actor argument. The present thesis (specifically, Article IV: Torn 2006b, Article V: Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010) also studies the use of overt

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[44] In the literature, participles are often defined as verbal adjectives as their morphology and syntactic behaviour resemble those of adjectives. Moreover, verb-derived participles exhibit verbal valence and are part of the verbal inflectional paradigm (Haspelmath 1994: 152).

expression of the agent in written and spoken Estonian and the interpretations of the implicit impersonal arguments in spoken Estonian.

Passives and impersonals generally differ in terms of their readiness to allow the expression of the demoted argument (see Siewierska 1984). Although the "basic" passive is considered agentless (Keenan 1985), the passive construction allows the expression of the agentive adverbial much more readily than the impersonal construction. Some languages (e.g., Polish) do not accept agentive adverbials in impersonals at all, while others (e.g., Estonian, Welsh) do, although only under certain conditions. Moreover, the acceptability of agentive adverbials in impersonals may be influenced by contacts with languages that have passive constructions. Where one language may have come to accept certain agentive adverbials in impersonals as a result of linguistic contact, its cognates which have not been exposed to similar influence may continue to exclude such adverbials.

As noted in section 4 above, several authors (Aavik 1936, Rajandi 1999 [1968], Erelt et al 1993, among others.) have claimed that Estonian voice constructions allow the use of agentive adverbials; yet they have not specified what constraints govern the use of these adverbials in Estonian impersonal and passive constructions. While Article IV (Torn 2006b) focuses on the constraints on the use of the *poolt* 'by' agentive phrases[45] in Estonian voice constructions in written data, Article V (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010) also briefly examines the use of different agentive phrases in spoken data.

The study on the constraints of the use of agentive adverbials in written Estonian (Article IV) consists of two parts: a larger corpus study and a short questionnaire. The corpus study was based on data drawn from the corpora of written Estonian between 1950 and the 1990s. The results of the corpus study show that the *poolt* agentive adverbial can be used both in the impersonal and passive construction, as mentioned in earlier studies of voice in Estonian but that the use of this adverbial is constrained by certain factors. Firstly, there are several restrictions concerning the agents expressed in agentive adverbials used in the impersonal voice. The noun that denotes the agent typically appears in the plural form and does not refer to a specific person but receives an indefinite interpretation, as illustrated in (65). In addition to plural nouns, collective nouns (e.g., *politsei* 'the police', *valitsus* 'the government') are frequently used in agentive adverbials. They do not refer to specific members of a group but to the group as a whole, and often to a group of people with some authority in society, as in (66). The noun in the agentive adverbial can also refer to an institution, such as an institute, church or a newspaper, which displays properties similar to those of a collective noun, as seen in (67).

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[45] A search in the Corpus of Old Written Estonian (http://www.murre.ut.ee/vakkur/Korpused/) shows that the *poolt* agentive construction is a relatively new one: the first agentive *poolt* constructions appear in the texts of the 1840s. In the texts of the 17th and 18th century, *poolt* constructions typically denote a place someone or something comes from.

(65) *Sinust   räägitakse   palju   head,   eriti   kolmandate*
      2SG.ELA   speak.IMPERS.PRS   a lot   good.PAR   especially   third.PL.GEN
      isikute   poolt.
      person.PL.GEN   by
      'You are spoken of highly, especially by third parties.'

(66) *Vancouveris   (Kanadas)   võeti   politsei   poolt kinni*
      Vancouver.INE   Candada.INE   take.IMPERS.PST   police.GEN   by   fast
      14-aastane   sutenöör   hüüdnimega   Mudilane.
      14-year-old   pimp.NOM   nickname.COM   toddler
      'A 14-year old pimp known as the Toddler was apprehended by the police in Van-
      couver (Canada).'

(67) *Aasta   tagasi   kuulutati   Els   Oksaar   USA*
      year.NOM   ago   announce.IMPERS.PST   Els   Oksaar.NOM   USA
      Elulooinstituudi   poolt   aasta   naiseks.
      Biography Institute.GEN   by   year.GEN   woman.TRAN
      'A year ago, Els Oksaar was declared the woman of the year by the ABI of the
      USA.'   (Torn 2006b: 111−112)

In general, corpus data show that singular nouns or proper names are infrequent
in agentive adverbials. In addition to media texts, the corpora also included legal
texts, which contain more instances of singular nouns in agentive adverbials. Yet
here again the singular noun does not refer to a specific person but to people
whose behaviour the legislation is intended to regulate, as in (68). If proper names
are used in the agentive adverbial, they tend to refer to people with authority, i.e.,
people acting as the head of a certain representative body.

(68) *Paki   sisu   kontrollitakse   enne   selle*
      package.GEN   content.NOM   check.IMPERS.PRS   before   this.GEN
      üleandmist   vahistatule   vanglaametniku   poolt ja   paki
      delivery.PAR   arrestee.ALL   prison officer.GEN   by   and   package.GEN
      saaja   juuresolekul.
      receiver.GEN   presence.ADE
      'Before the delivery of the package to its recipient, the contents of the package are
      checked by the prison officer in the presence of the recipient.'
                                                              (Torn 2006b: 113)

Another important criterion for determining the acceptability of the agentive
adverbial is transitivity – all examples of the impersonal construction that
occurred with agentive adverbials contained transitive verbs. This could be

explained by the fact that in the case of transitives, the activity takes place between two participants and mentioning the actor participant serves the pragmatic purpose of clarification, whilst in the case of intransitives, impersonalization stresses the activity denoted by the verb and thus shifts the focus further away from the actor, rendering further clarification by means of agentive adverbials irrelevant.

The passive also allows the use of agentive adverbials, although these are not frequent either. Restrictions on the referent of the noun used in agentive adverbials are not as strict as in the case of impersonals, although the same tendencies seem to apply here. Many examples involve nouns referring to specific people, yet there are also plenty of examples with plural nouns, collective nouns or singular nouns interpretable as conveying indefinite referents.

A short questionnaire was used to elicit acceptability judgments from native speakers of Estonian concerning the use of agentive adverbials in impersonal and passive constructions. Respondents were asked to rate the acceptability of sentences on a three-point scale: fully grammatical, conceivably possible, and completely ungrammatical. The 60 sentences tested included 46 sentences with an agentive adverbial and 14 fillers. Most sentences were taken from the corpus study, except for intransitive examples that did not exist in the corpus and were constructed by the author. The results from 70 respondents who completed the questionnaire showed that 59.6% of them regarded the use of *poolt* agentive adverbials in the impersonal construction as ungrammatical and unacceptable. An interesting contrast can be noted in the responses concerning the use of agentive adverbials with transitive and intransitive verbs respectively. 41.5% of respondents judged the use of agentive adverbials with impersonal transitive verbs ungrammatical and unacceptable, while the proportion of responses judging the agentive adverbials with impersonal intransitive verbs ungrammatical and unacceptable was 93.8% – a finding corroborated by the corpus study. As for passive constructions, agentive adverbials were judged more acceptable than in impersonal constructions. However, 41.7% of the responses still indicated that the respondent would not use the passive sentence with an agentive adverbial although the sentence may be acceptable in certain contexts. The results of the questionnaire, while certainly not definitive, point to a clear tendency in the acceptability judgments of native speakers of Estonian.

The study on the use of different overt agentive phrases (*poolt* phrases, adessive phrases, elative phrases) in spoken data (Article V) reveals that overt agentive phrases are very rare in spoken data. When used, they tend to appear more often in periphrastic 'be' + -*tud* constructions, which may be ambiguous between impersonal and personal passive readings. Adessive phrases, which do not always receive an agentive reading, are more common in ordinary spoken language, while *poolt* phrases tend to occur in more formal context. The data included in the study revealed no instances of elative agentive phrases.

Article V (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010) also contributes new data to studies of the interpretation of voice constructions in Estonian. While most studies (e.g.,

Erelt et al 1993) focus on written Estonian and conclude that in general the implicit impersonal argument refers to either an indefinite actor or a general actor, Torn-Leesik and Vihman analyse the implicit impersonal actor referent in impersonal constructions in spoken Estonian. In this study, the use of impersonal constructions is examined in two corpora of spoken language that differ in their degree of formality. The analysis shows that the implicit impersonal actor referent receives its reading at the pragmatic level. That is, impersonal constructions can be analysed as having a unified semantics that associates the impersonal actor referent with certain canonical semantic features (see Vihman 2004), which can then be further specified in the discourse context.

Although the results of the study support existing descriptions of the functions of the impersonal, they also highlight a number of key differences. The main new finding is that the impersonal is used relatively often in spoken language for specific, identifiable or even overtly identified referents, in addition to its more canonical uses which refer to unidentified or generalised actors. It is known that the impersonal generally leaves the agent unexpressed, yet masking or generalising its referent does not always seem to be part of the communicative function of the impersonal in spoken language. Instead, such usage demonstrates various pragmatic devices, such as a way of echoing an impersonal construction used earlier in the discourse, a politeness strategy or stylistic considerations. Hence, the variation in readings of the impersonal actor arises not from differing semantics of the construction, but rather from contextual effects and discourse pragmatics.

Torn-Leesik and Vihman (2010) classify the interpretations of the implicit impersonal into five categories: universal, vague existential, specific existential, corporate and future-hypothetical. The universal reading of the impersonal argument applies to all referents within the relevant context, that is, the impersonal describes what is generally done. This is illustrated in (69).

(69)   *aga `millest see tuleb, kas see tulene:b kodusest `kasvatusest või elementaarsest viisa-*
       kusest, et vastu- vastutulijale öeldakse   kodurajoonis `tere näiteks
              that passer-by.ALL   say.IMPERS.PRS home-area.INE hello for.example
       'but where does it come from, does it spring from good parenting or basic
       politeness, that people say hello to passers-by in their neighbourhood for instance'
                                                        (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010: 311)

The universal reading of the impersonal coincides with Shore's Prototype I (1988) according to which the plural human actor takes a maximally broad scope within the appropriate boundary, as set by overt adverbs or the discourse context. Such impersonal clauses also resemble German *man* and French *on* clauses, which denote general, non-specific agents (Siewierska 1984: 115, Siewierska 2004: 210). Universal generic impersonals illustrate cases of stereotyping, describing habitual behaviour or customs that people follow, or occur in sayings or proverbs. Both corpora that were analysed for the study include instances of

the impersonals with universal interpretation, yet these do not dominate in the data from either source.

The existential reading of the impersonal was the most frequent across the spoken data examined in the study. The existential examples do not imply maximally broad scope or generalised reference, but refer to a smaller group, or even single individuals. The feature [+plural] usually applies here too, but with a narrow-scope referent. Yet, there are also a number of examples where even this feature is overridden and a singular referent is implied. Since this constitutes an unusual use of the impersonal construction, in those cases there must be a particular motivation for the use of the impersonal. The [+human] feature is the least easily overridden and the data do not feature any examples of non-human referents. Existential examples correspond to Shore's Prototype II, according to which the unidentified actor refers to "an unspecified group of people", but not a generalised referent (Shore 1988: 166). The analysis shows that two kinds of existential readings can be distinguished: the vague existential and the specific existential. In the case of the former, the referent of the implicit argument is unidentified and unspecific, while in the case of the latter, the referent is specific and identifiable in the discourse. The vague existential and the specific existential readings are illustrated in (70) and (71) respectively:

(70) *on*   `*sissemurdmisi*=  *ja (.)* `*väljastpoolt lõhutakse*   *mõnikord*
      be.PRS.3   break-in.PL.PAR   and   from.outside   break.IMPERS.PRS sometimes
      =mõnikord `*haknad*   *ära.*
      sometimes   window.PL.NOM   away
      'there are break-ins and sometimes they smash in your windows.'

(71) *ja=sis lugesin head artiklit. (.) $ vist Pere ja Kodu ajakirjast, kus oli ka $ (.)*
      `*loedja noh nagu täielik* `*idüll tundub kõik, et perel on mingisugune oma*
      `*maja=ja (.) ja tuleb välja=et (.)* `*iga   reede   tehakse*
                                           every   Friday   do.IMPERS.PRS
      `*suurkoristus*       *ja   ja* `*mees   ka   koristab   [jõle* `*hoolega*
      big.clean-up.NOM   and and man.NOM also clean.PRS.3SG awful care.COM
      ja   kõik   on   väga   ilus
      and   all.NOM   be.PRS.3   very   beautiful
      'and then I read an interesting article from the magazine Family and Home, I think, where … you read and y'know everything just seems to be picture perfect, where the family have a home of their own and it turns out that every Friday they   clean it top to bottom and … and the husband is also totally bent on cleaning and everything's so nice'   (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010: 315, 319)

The difference between the two types of existential readings illustrates a function distinctive to the spoken use of impersonals – in the written language, imperso-nals with specific referents are rare. In some instances in the spoken data, specific

referents are mentioned in the immediately preceding or subsequent discourse, which eliminates both the generalising feature as well as the agent-masking function. This contrasts with one of the primary functions of the impersonal cited in the literature, that of the agent-demoting or suppressing function (Comrie 1977, Givón 1982, Pihlak 1993). It appears that the function of the impersonal, at least in spoken Estonian, is broader than has been previously assumed.

The implicit argument of impersonal constructions frequently receive a corporate reading, which applies when the impersonal referent is a socially designated group of people, such as the government, various collective bodies with official authority, or institutions such as the school, the police, and others. Example (72) illustrates these cases.

(72) *meile   või- õpetajatele   võimaldati   minna (.)*
1PL.ALL   or   teacher.PL.ALL enable.IMPERS.PST go.INF
psühholoogiakursustele   kahepäevastele   kool   maksis
psychology.course.PL.ALL   two-day.PL.ALL   school.NOM pay.PST.3SG
selle   `kinni= ja.
this.GEN   for   and
'it was made possible for us – or teachers – to attend a two-day psychology course that the school paid for and.'   (Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010: 329)

Although utterances with corporate readings resemble a sub-class of existentials, they can be seen as a large group distinct from either specific or vague-referent existentials. In most cases, if the referent is not explicitly expressed, the discourse context makes the corporate referent clear and distinguishable from ordinary specific and vague referents. The corporate impersonal is also used when the exact identity or name of institutional agents is not known or not considered relevant, or when the agents involved in the institutional action are too diverse and distant for the speaker to identify. In the spoken language corpus, the instances of corporate impersonals were considerably less frequent than in the minutes of the *Riigikogu.*

The fifth category of interpretations is future-hypothetical and covers certain *irrealis* predicates (predicates that refer to nonfactual events or have nonactual referents) that could not be easily accounted for by either existential or universal readings. These predicates refer to a hypothetical or future event and involve reference to an abstract or non-existent potential actor, which means that the actor is not simply vague and unspecified but rather unspecifiable. The motivation for using the impersonal in such cases is therefore different from that encountered in vague existential examples.

(73) *mis: ta:* `*lassoga*                     *hakatakse*      `*hambaid*
      what 3SG lasso.COM begin.IMPERS.PRS tooth.PL.PAR out
      välja   *tõmba[ma= võ.]*
      pull.SUP   or
      'what she… they're going to start pulling out teeth with a lasso.'

(Torn-Leesik and Vihman 2010: 332)

In conclusion, this study shows that in spoken Estonian the implicit impersonal argument receives a more varied range of interpretations than has been proposed so far. The interpretations are motivated by different factors, some of which remain compatible with the earlier understanding of Estonian impersonals while others shed new light on the use of impersonals in Estonian.

5.4. Acquisition of voice in Estonian

The present thesis also contributes to research on the acquisition of Estonian (Article VI: Vija, Torn-Leesik and Pajusalu 2009). One of the aims of investigating the acquisition of voice by Estonian children was to see whether there were any differences in patterns of acquisition of Estonian voice constructions and certain Indo-European languages. The study is novel in that there are no previous studies on the acquisition of voice in Estonian. Earlier studies of the acquisition of Estonian (Vija 2000, Vija 2007, Argus 2008) have concentrated on the categories of person, case, tense and aspect. The study (Article VI) consists of two parts: an analysis of spontaneous language data from Estonian children available in the CHILDES corpus and an analysis of the results of a comprehension task on voice constructions conducted with 4 to 6-year-old Estonian children.

Despite the lack of previous studies on the acquisition of voice in Estonian, the acquisition of passives has received considerable attention in other languages, especially English. The general conclusion on the developmental pattern in this regard has been that passive constructions are acquired later than actives and that there are differences in the order of acquisition of the different types of passives as well. For instance, Turner and Rommetveit (1967) claim that children first imitate their caretakers' passive constructions without fully comprehending these, and that comprehension and production only follow at a later stage. Moreover, several authors (Baldie 1976, Bowerman 1982, Maratsos et al 1985, among others) have claimed that although children comprehend passives by the age of three, they do not fully acquire long agentive passives or passives of non-actional verbs before school age. Studies also show differences between the participants' comprehension and production ability. For instance, studies on English (e.g., Gordon and Chafetz 1990, Maratsos et al 1985, Hirsch and Wexler 2006) show no significant difference between the comprehension of short and long passives, while production data show that children acquiring English

typically start with short agentless passives (Fox and Grodzinsky 1998). For instance, Israel, Johnson and Brooks (2000), studying the production of passives by English-speaking children between the ages of 1;8−5;0, claim that children go through three periods: a period of adjectival, stative passives, a period of passive participles, and finally, the use of participles to indicate events. Their study shows that verbal or event passives are acquired last.

Explanation for the relative time of acquisition of voice constructions also varies depending on the theoretical framework employed and the basis on which the explanation is constructed. Formal, generative theories often stress the complex structural changes that passivization requires, while usage-based theories relate the order of acquisition to the frequency of occurrence of passive constructions in the input (e.g., Brooks and Tomasello 1999). For instance, although passive constructions are not frequent in the input, it was found that special training may help the child learn to produce any kind of passive before three years of age (Brooks and Tomasello 1999).

The corpus study (Article VI) mainly focuses on data from Andreas, whose speech was systematically recorded between the ages 1;7.24−3;1.13 (see also a later study by Torn-Leesik and Vija 2012). The analysis of the data shows that Andreas first began to use impersonal forms systematically at the age of three. Although his data for the earlier years also included a few instances of impersonal constructions, they were often imitations of the caregiver's speech and could not be seen as anything approaching adult-like usage, nor were they discourse-pragmatically appropriate (see also Torn-Leesik and Vija 2012). It must be considered, of course, that the caregiver's speech during that period does not include many impersonal forms either. A dramatic change appears to have taken place by the time Andreas turned three: there is a noticeable increase in the use of voice constructions by both Andreas and his caregivers, and the number of instances used by both parties is almost equivalent. Although the data of the study come mainly from one child, and far-reaching conclusions cannot be drawn on their basis, the tendencies indicate a rather early appearance of impersonal voice constructions in Estonian child language, particularly in production. This may be explained by the nature of Estonian voice constructions: impersonals constructions are valency-maintaining, whereas passives, often stative in nature, are valency-changing (cf. Israel, Johnson and Brooks 2000). Moreover, this early use of impersonal forms may also be related to the contexts in which they are used. There are two principal frequent contexts where impersonal forms are used by both Andreas and his caregiver. The first involves situations in which the impersonal form refers to people's general (and socially accepted) behaviours, that is, the impersonal form is used to convey conventional rules, as illustrated in (74), which describes the situation where Andreas and his mother are discussing what one does with chewing-gum.

(74) *MOT: *nätsu ei närita* (NEG chew.IMPERS.INF) *katki, näts visatakse* (throw.IMPERS.PRS) *ära prügikasti.*
*CHI: *nätsutakse [*] [= nätsutatakse]* (chew.IMPERS.PRS) *kõigepealt ära, siis visatakse* (throw.IMPERS.PRES).

'*MOT: you don't break the chewing gum with your teeth, you throw it in the bin.
*CHI: first you chew it up, then throw it in the bin.'

(Vija, Torn-Leesik and Pajusalu 2009: 336)

The second type of context describes situations which are in progress at the moment of speaking and in which the impersonal forms refer to an indefinite actor, focussing on the activity rather than its agent. Example (75) illustrates this use of the impersonal: Andreas asks his mother to leave his toy house because the place is going to be renovated and during renovation work people cannot play there. The agent carrying out the renovation is left unspecified.

(75) *CHI: *jah, aga siin putkas tehtakse [*] [= tehakse]* (do.IMPERS.PRS) *remont.*
*MOT: *remont tehakse* (do.IMPERS.PRS*), ja kus sina sellel ajal elad, kui remont on?*
*CHI: *enda kodus.*

'*CHI: yes but this hut will be renovated.
*MOT: renovated. And where are you going to live while it's being renovated?
*CHI: at my own place.'   (Vija, Torn-Leesik and Pajusalu 2009: 336)

The comprehension test, conducted among 4 to 6-year-old Estonian children, concentrated on impersonal and passive sentences but also tested sentences with SVO and OVS orders. Active sentences with OVS order were included in the test because in certain respects these resemble passive sentences of Indo-European languages in which the object is promoted to the initial subject position.[46] Children were shown a series of three pictures that presented three participants. They were then asked to point out the picture that described the sentence they had heard. One of the pictures always described a neutral situation with no activity. The test results showed that children of the age range 4−6 had no problems in understanding impersonal (*tüdrukut pestakse* 'someone is washing the girl') and stative passive sentences (*tüdruk on pestud* 'the girl has been washed'); the correct answers were given in 93% and 91% of cases respectively. Analysis by age group did not reveal significant differences in the case of impersonals either, the figures were 90%, 94% and 95% respectively. In the case of the stative passive, the figures were 82%, 89% and 98%. The impersonals with agentive adverbials (*tüdrukut pestakse ema poolt* 'the girl is being washed by her mother') did not present many problems either although the proportion of correct responses declined somewhat (79%). The results of this study coincide with the results of a

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[46] Active sentences with an OVS order are frequently used to translate English 'long' passives (see Randma 1974).

similar comprehension study that focussed on impersonal voice/short passives[47] in Estonian and Finnish (Kunnari, Torn-Leesik and Tolonen 2010). The results of that study revealed that the performance of Finnish and Estonian 4-year-old children falls within the success range of 62%–100% on impersonals/short passives and the performance of 5-year-olds was close to ceiling: 81%–100% of correct responses on impersonals/short passives. Both comprehension tests show that Estonian voice constructions do not pose any comprehension problems for Estonian children and that they are acquired relatively early.[48]

To conclude, the results of the corpus analysis of longitudinal data and of the comprehension test show that voice constructions and, in particular, impersonal constructions, are acquired relatively early by Estonian children. The reason for this early acquisition of impersonals in Estonian may lie in the structural difference that sets them apart from passives of the Indo-European type. Estonian impersonalization preserves verb valency, while passivization changes it. Another reason for the early acquisition by children of Estonian impersonal constructions may be related to the relatively high frequency of the contexts in which they are used.

5.5. Concluding remarks and prospects for future research

The present thesis makes a substantial contribution to the study of voice constructions in Estonian by clarifying a number of issues that have not previously been investigated in detail. The impersonal voice serves as the central focus of the studies in this thesis as it forms the core of the voice system in Estonian. A primary result of these studies is a demonstration that the impersonal and the personal passive are distinct constructions in Estonian that can be distinguished through the analysis of the different types of constraints applied to their formation. The constraints on the impersonal voice in Estonian strongly resemble the constraints on impersonal voice constructions in other languages that contain such constructions (e.g., Welsh, Polish). The thesis also offers a possible analysis of the constructional overlap between impersonal compound tenses and the personal passive. In addition, the studies of the use of agentive *poolt* adverbials in voice constructions show that such use is subject to definite constraints on the type of the noun referent and the transitivity of the verb. In this respect, the Estonian impersonal voice construction exhibits properties that are parallel to those of impersonal constructions in other languages (e.g., Welsh) that allow agentive adverbials but restrict their use in similar ways. The study of

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[47] The Finnish construction was classified as 'short passive'.
[48] The results of another, large scale study on the comprehension of passives (Armon-Lotem et al, in press) show that Estonian and Finnish 5-year-old children perform considerably better on the comprehension test than children of the same age who speak Catalan, Cypriot Greek, English, and Lithuanian.

spoken data shows that agentive adverbials in general are infrequent in spoken discourse, and when used, the adessive phrases are preferred to others. The study of the interpretation of implicit arguments in impersonal constructions in spoken Estonian also provides new data showing that the interpretative range is greater, at least in spoken Estonian, than previously acknowledged in grammars. Finally, the acquisition studies reveal that Estonian voice constructions, especially impersonal constructions, are acquired earlier than voice constructions in Indo-European languages have been reported to be acquired in earlier literature. This result may also implicate a difference between the nature of the Estonian impersonal voice constructions and the passive voice constructions in Indo-European languages.

The detailed treatment of Estonian voice constructions in the thesis also points to a range of additional questions that require further study. Future research is required to obtain a more detailed analysis of constraints and functions of the personal passive in Estonian. One component of this study would be a wider survey clarifying any aspectual constraints on the verbs that can be passivised by contemporary native speakers of Estonian. A directly related issue concerns the status of -*tud*-participles. A separate set of questions arises in connection with other, less prominent, voice constructions, such as impersonalised impersonals and the so-called *saama* passive and *saama* impersonal. This study requires more research on existing sources, complemented by a corpus study to determine the frequency and functional role of these constructions. The status of agentive adverbials presents another cluster of questions that can best be addressed by conducting a corpus study of the different types of agentive adverbials (adessive and elative agentive phrases) used in voice constructions in written Estonian in different registers and genres. A large-scale study of this kind would provide useful data bearing on the issue of whether the constraints applying to the *poolt* constructions apply to other types as well and whether the written language shows a preference for any of the types. The claims about acquisition presented in the thesis likewise highlight the need for more extensive acquisition data, to evaluate these claims as well as to assess general claims based on other languages.

6. CONCLUSION

The present PhD thesis investigates the properties of Estonian impersonal and passive voice constructions. The Estonian voice system contains both an active-passive and a personal-impersonal opposition and thus provides an excellent opportunity to study these two phenomena side by side within a single linguistic system. The aim of the thesis is to clarify the status of the two voice oppositions in Estonian and to demonstrate that the Estonian impersonal voice is a voice category in its own right and should not be considered a subconstruction of the passive macro-construction.

The thesis approaches the grammatical category of voice in traditional relational terms, analysing voice oppositions as reflections of changes in the mapping of grammatical functions onto the arguments of the predicate. A central hypothesis that receives confirmation from multiple sources is that passive and impersonal voice differ fundamentally in their operational nature. Among the phenomena that have been examined, there has been a particular focus on (i) the constraints that limit the formation of both types of construction, (ii) the constructional overlap between passive and periphrastic impersonal forms, (iii) the compatibility of each construction with agentive adverbials and the interpretations associated with the implicit argument of the Estonian impersonal, and (iv) the implications that can be drawn from the acquisition of impersonal and passive constructions by Estonian children.

Passive constructions have been at the heart of both typological and theoretical treatments of voice, as they are well attested in Indo-European languages and in many other language families around the world. Impersonals, however, have received much less attention. The difficulties for the typological study of impersonals result in part from the application of the term 'impersonal' to highly heterogeneous phenomena, including nontransitive weather verbs and subjectless passives as well as active impersonal constructions. The bias in favour of passive constructions within contemporary formal linguistic theories has led many theorists to adopt principles or constraints on voice constructions that distort or even preclude the description of impersonal constructions. Due to the partial overlap in communicative function observed in passives and impersonals, as well as the existence of subjectless passives which lack explicit subjects, rendering them superficially similar to impersonal actives, impersonal voice constructions have often been misanalysed as passives. Yet this analysis obscures the fact that passivization is fundamentally a valence-reducing process that deletes the logical subject and changes the transitivity of the verb, whereas impersonalization merely suppresses the logical subject while maintaining the syntactic and semantic transitivity of the verb. The crucial respects in which passivization and impersonalization differ include, among others, their different effects on the verb's argument structure and contrasting constraints on the verb classes allowed as input, on the semantics of the subject of the input verb, and on the acceptability of agentive adverbials.

The six articles of the thesis examine data from various sources including written and spoken corpora, a comprehension experiment and native speaker judgments reflecting the intuitions of the author and other native speakers of Estonian. Each article addresses a specific aspect of the Estonian voice system that has not previously been studied in detail. The chief contributions of the thesis can be summarised in four points corresponding to the areas of particular focus of the investigations that make up the core of the thesis.

Firstly, the author shows that although Estonian passives and impersonals are both subject-oriented and share certain communicative functions, they exhibit distinct lexical, semantic and morphosyntactic constraints. The differences in lexical constraints relate to the selection of input verbs. Impersonalization accepts both transitive and intransitive verbs as well unaccusatives and modals, while passivization is limited to transitives only. The semantic constraint that distinguishes impersonal constructions from the passive is the requirement of the feature [+human] in the subject of the verb – a limitation that does not apply to passivization. Yet, when a passive construction is impersonalised, the constraint becomes operative. Another distinctive morphosyntactic constraint that applies to the impersonal is that impersonalization is only possible with verbs that take nominative subjects, which is best illustrated in the interaction of voice and modality. The constraints on passivization in Estonian concern the telicity of the verb. When the verb allows a telic reading, it is compatible with the meaning of the passive and thus acceptable in this voice construction. With respect to partitive stative verbs, the acceptability of their passive constructions depends on the degree of adjectivization of the participle.

Secondly, to clarify the constructional overlap between Estonian periphrastic impersonals and passives, the thesis proposes an entry for the -*tud* participle that contains different sets of spell-out features depending on whether the participle is realised as part of the verbal paradigm (as in Estonian impersonal constructions) or has an adjectival nature (as in Estonian passive constructions).

Thirdly, the corpus study of the use of the *poolt* agentive adverbials used in written Estonian highlights significant differences between the impersonal and the passive. The results of the study demonstrate that although agentive adverbials can be used in impersonal as well as passive constructions, in the case of impersonals their use is constrained by factors such as the plurality or indefinite nature of the referent of the agent noun and the transitivity of the verb. In the case of the passive, restrictions on the referent of the agent noun are less pronounced, although similar tendencies seem to apply here. The study on spoken Estonian shows that agentive adverbials are infrequently used, and tend to manifest as adessive phrases.

With respect to the interpretation of the actor argument of Estonian impersonal constructions, the author's contribution is expanded by the study of the referents of the implicit actor argument of impersonal constructions used in spoken Estonian. The study extends earlier studies on voice, which have generally relied on written data. Although the results of the study broadly support existing

descriptions of the functions of the impersonal, i.e., that the impersonal is used to refer to unidentified or generalised actors, they also include several novel findings. The main new finding is that the impersonal is used relatively often in spoken language for specific, salient or identifiable referents. In cases where the referent is known, the impersonal is not used to generalise the agent or to leave it unspecified, but has other motivations such as a politeness strategy or stylistic considerations.

Fourthly, the analysis of acquisition data underscores differences between Estonian impersonals and Indo-European passives. The results of the study show that impersonal constructions are acquired relatively early by Estonian children. This can be explained by the high frequency of the contexts in which impersonals are used in the communication between Estonian children and caregivers as well as the structural differences that distinguish passives from impersonals.

The studies reported on in the thesis contribute to the field by providing a detailed overview of the core aspects of the Estonian impersonal and passive constructions. An additional outcome of the investigations reported in the thesis is the identification of aspects of the Estonian voice system that merit further study (notably clarification of the properties of the personal passive, and of constructions that allow both an impersonal and passive interpretation). The thesis can be used as a point of reference for introducing the necessary adaptations into the theoretical frameworks that seek to offer broadly applicable accounts for voice phenomena. In addition, the thesis can be used as source material for cross-linguistic comparisons of voice systems.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE INTRODUCTION

ACC	accusative
ABL	ablative
ADE	adessive
ALL	allative
APP	active past participle
COM	comitative
CON	conditional
DAT	dative
DIM	diminutive
ELA	elative
FEM	feminine
GEN	genitive
IMPERS	impersonal
ILL	illative
INE	inessive
IND	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INST	instrumental
MASC	masculinum
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
NEUT	neutrum
NONVIR	nonviral
PAR	partitive
PART	participle
PASS	passive
PERF	perfective
PL	plural
PPP	passive past participle
PRS	present
PST	past
REFL	reflexive
SG	singular
SUP	supine
TERM	terminative
TRAN	translative
VN	verbal noun
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person

KOKKUVÕTE
(Summary in Estonian)

Doktoritöö „An Investigation of Voice Constructions in Estonian" („Uurimus eesti keele tegumoekonstruktsioonidest") koondab autori artiklid eesti impersonaali- ning passiivikonstruktsioonide eri aspektide kohta, lisades neile üldistava ja kokkuvõtva saatepeatüki, milles esitatakse kasutatud andmestiku ja metoodika ülevaatlik kirjeldus, käsitletakse teemaga puutumust omavaid olulisemaid teoreetilisi raamistikke ning kirjeldatakse varasemaid uuringuid asjaomases valdkonnas ja autori panust valdkonna arendamisse.

Nii tüpoloogilised kui teoreetilised tegumoekonstruktsioonide käsitlused keskenduvad valdavalt opositsioonile aktiivi- ja passiivikonstruktsioonide vahel – nimetatud opositsioon on laialt tuntud indoeuroopa ning teisteski keeltes üle maailma. Seetõttu on sellele sageli vaikimisi omistatud tegumoelise põhiopositsiooni staatus, millest tulenevalt jääb sageli tähelepanuta teine oluline opositsioonitüüp – isikulise ja umbisikulise (e impersonaalse) tegumoe (tuntud nt läänemeresoome, keldi ja slaavi keeltes) vastandus –, ning viimasele iseloomulikud konstruktsioonid üritatakse suruda neile mitteomasesse aktiivi/passiivi raamistikku. Üks oluline faktor, mis uurijaid niisugusele analüütilisele lahendusele suunab, on nn subjektita (mõnedes käsitlustes 'impersonaalsete') passiivikonstruktsioonide olemasolu nt indoeuroopa keeltes. Asjaolu, et eesti keeles on esindatud mõlemad opositsioonid – nii isikuline-umbisikuline kui ka aktiiv-passiiv –, muudab selle keele tänuväärseks uurimisobjektiks. Vaatamata sellele, et pealiskaudsel vaatlemisel muudab eksplitsiitselt väljendatud aluse puudumine subjektita passiivikonstruktsioonid märkimisväärselt sarnaseks impersonaalile – ning hoolimata funktsionaalsest analoogiast teatud keelte passiivikonstruktsioonide ja impersonaali vahel –, on tegemist siiski kahe eri konstruktsiooniga, millel on erinevad tunnused (nt sisendina aktsepteeritavad verbiklassid, muutused verbi argumentstruktuuris, agentadverbiaali lubatavus ja interpretatsioon).

Käesoleva doktoritöö põhiosa moodustavad kuus artiklit, millest igaüks keskendub mõnele eesti keele tegumoekonstruktsioonide spetsiifilisele aspektile, mida ei ole varem süvitsi uuritud. Doktoritöö panustab nelja peamisse valdkonda: piirangud impersonaali ja passiivi moodustamisel ja kasutamisel eesti keeles, impersonaali ja passiivi konstruktsioonide vormiline kattuvus, taandatud argumendi realiseerumine agentadverbiaalina ja interpretatsioon eesti keele impersonaali- ja passiivikonstruktsioonides, tegumoekonstruktsioonide omandamine eesti keelt esimese keelena kõnelevate laste poolt.

Doktoritöös püstitatud uurimisküsimused on:

1) Missuguste leksikaalsete, semantiliste ja morfosüntaktiliste piirangutega peab arvestama eesti impersonaali- ning passiivikonstruktsioonide moodustamisel? Küsimust käsitletakse artiklis I (Torn-Leesik 2009), artiklis II (Torn-Leesik 2007) ja teatud määral ka teistes töö põhiossa kuuluvates artiklites;

2) Kuidas selgitada osalist vormilist kattuvust passiivi- ja impersonaalikonst-ruktsioonide vahel eesti keeles? Küsimust käsitletakse artiklis III (Torn 2006a);

3) Kas agentadverbiaalid on eesti keele tegumoekonstruktsioonides lubatud piiranguteta? Kui nende kasutamisel tuleb arvestada piirangutega, siis mis-sugused need piirangud on? Kas agentadverbiaale kasutatakse eesti kõne-keeles? Missugust semantilist informatsiooni edastavad eesti kõnekeeles kasutatavate tegumoekonstruktsioonide implitsiitsed argumendid? Küsimusi käsitletakse artiklis IV (Torn 2006b) ja artiklis V (Torn-Leesik ja Vihman 2010);

4) Kas andmed uuringutest, mis vaatlevad lastel eesti keele omandamist esimese keelena, toovad esile erinevusi passiivi- ja impersonaalikonstruktsioonide vahel? Kas vastavad erinevused peaksid tingima passiivi- ja impersonaali-konstruktsioonide käsitlemise eri tegumoididena? Küsimusi käsitletakse artiklis VI (Vija, Torn-Leesik ja Pajusalu 2009).

Doktoritöö analüüsib eesti keele tegumoekonstruktsioone nii kirjalikus kui suulises keeles ning kasutab seetõttu asjakohase andmestiku saamiseks eri allikaid. Doktoritöös püstitatud küsimustele vastamisel on kasutatud nii eesti keele kirjakeele eri korpuseid kui ka eesti kõnekeele korpust ja Riigikogu toime-tamata stenogrammide andmebaasi. Tegumoekonstruktsioonide omandamise protsessi käsitlemisel on kasutatud korpust CHILDES. Muuhulgas on imperso-naali- ja passiivikonstruktsioonide kasutusjuhtude leidmiseks kasutatud Google otsingumootorit ja tegumoekonstruktsioonide aktsepteeritavust on palutud hinnata keelejuhtidel. Tegumoekonstruktsioonide omandamist on testitud ka mõistmiskatsega.

Doktoritöö artikkel I (Torn-Leesik 2009) keskendub võrdlevas plaanis piirangutele impersonaali ja passiivi moodustamisel. Passiivi moodustamisel on esimeseks piiranguks transitiivsus, s.t. passiivikonstruktsioonide moodustamine on võimalik vaid transitiivsetest sisendverbidest, samas impersonaali puhul see piirang ei kehti ja sisendverbideks võivad olla nii intransitiivsed kui transitiivsed verbid. Teiseks oluliseks erinevuseks, mille doktoritöö autor on ka varasemalt välja toonud (Torn 2002), on see, et impersonaali moodustamisel saavad sisend-verbideks olla ka mitteakusatiivsed verbid (nt *surema, olema, jääma*). Mitte-akusatiivhüpoteesi (*The Unaccusative Hypothesis*, Perlmutter 1978) kohaselt ei saa passiivi moodustada mitteakusatiivsetest verbidest, sest passiivis toimub tegevussubjekti taandamine, mitteakusatiivsetel verbidel aga puudub tegevus-subjekt, mida taandada. Nimetatud piirang kehtib eesti keele passiivi puhul, kuid ei puuduta impersonaali. Piirangu mitterakendumine eesti impersonaalikonst-ruktsioonide moodustamisel kinnitab, et eesti impersonaali ja passiivi näol on tegemist kahe eri konstruktsiooniga ja mitte ühe konstruktsiooni alltüüpidega. Kolmandaks erinevuseks kõnealuste konstruktsioonide vahel on see, et imperso-naali moodustamisel saavad sisendverbideks olla ka modaalverbid (nt *võidakse minna*), samas kui passiivikonstruktsioonide puhul ei ole see aktsepteeritav.

Passiivis saavad modaalverbid küll võtta passiivse tarindi (*Ta võis olla sõprade poolt petetud*), kuid neil endil passiivivormid puuduvad (*∗Ta oli võidud sõprade poolt petetud*). Asjaolu, et enamusel eesti keele modaalverbidest on olemas impersonaalivormid, annab täiendava kinnituse väitele, et impersonaali näol ei ole (passiivi-aktiivi opositsiooni mõistes) tegemist passiivi-, vaid pigem aktiivi-konstruktsiooniga (vt artikkel II).

Semantiline piirang impersonaali ja passiivi moodustamisel on seotud vastava aktiivilause subjektile esitatavate nõuetega. Varasemad eesti keele tegumoekäsit-lused on rõhutanud, et aktiivi subjektiargument peab impersonaali moodustamise võimaldamise jaoks kandma tunnust [+elus] (Rajandi 1999[1968]). Samas aga täheldab doktoritöö autor (artikkel I, vt ka Torn 2002, Vihman 2004), et eesti impersonaali moodustamisel on oluline tunnus [+inimene]. Kui verbi subjekti-argumendil puudub tunnus [+inimene], saab impersonaliseerimisel lausung vaikimisi metafoorse interpretatsiooni (*Õues haugutakse*). Sõnasõnalise inter-pretatsiooni kindlustamiseks oleks niisugustel juhudel vaja täiendavat kon-tekstuaalset pidet. Erinevalt impersonaalist ei kehti inimtegija nõue passiivi moodustamisel, kuid aktiveerub, kui passiivikonstruktsioon kujundatakse ümber impersonaaliks (*Raamatud olid läbi loetud → *Oldi läbi loetud*).

Morfosüntaktilise piiranguna on autor oma töödes toonud välja nimetava-käändelise aluse nõude impersonaalikonstruktsiooni moodustamisel. Eriti selgelt ilmneb see piirang modaalverbide puhul. Nt modaalverbid *tarvitsema* ja *pruu-kima* evivad eitavas kontekstis nimetavakäändelisi alusargumente ning omavad vastavaid impersonaalvorme, samas kui jaatavas kõnes markeerivad nad alus-argumendi adessiivis ja impersonaalvorme ei oma. Nimetatud morfosüntaktiline piirang kehtib koos semantilise piiranguga, mis nõuab inimtegijat.

Artiklis I (Torn-Leesik 2009) on autor tõstatanud passiivi sisendina toimivate transitiivverbide aspektuaalsuspiirangu küsimuse. Rajandi (1999[1968]) ning Mihkla and Valmis (1979) on seisukohal, et eesti keeles omavad passiivivorme nii partitiivsed kui ka aspektiverbid (definitsioon antud nt teoses Erelt et al (1993: 49–50)). Autori hinnangul ei pruugi see siiski kehtida kõigi partitiivverbide puhul. Varasemad uuringud (Zaenen 1993; Carnie ja Harley 2005; Abraham ja Leiss 2006) teistes keeltes passiivikonstruktsioonide moodustamisel kehtivate aspektuaalsuspiirangute kohta on näidanud, et nimetatud piirangud on eri liiki passiivikonstruktsioonide puhul erinevad. Niisugused erisused iseloomustavad nt dünaamilist ja staatilist personaalpassiivi saksa keeles. Samuti saab saksa keeles subjektita passiivikonstruktsioone moodustada üksnes imperfektiivsetest pre-dikaatidest, ning vastavatele konstruktsioonidele ei saa asjaomase piirangu iseloomust tulenevalt lisada perfektiivseid laiendeid. Kuna eesti impersonaal erineb olemuslikult passiivikonstruktsioonidest, siis viimati nimetatud piirang selle puhul ei kehti. Eesti passiiv sarnaneb samas märkimisväärselt inglise keele adjektiivpassiivile (*adjectival passive*), samuti saksa keele seisundipassiivile (*Zustandspassiv*). Sellisena peaks ta alluma sarnastele piirangutele, millest olu-lisimaks on sisendpredikaadi perfektiivsuse nõue. Nimetatud nõue on täidetud aspektiverbide täissihitislike või leksikaalselt perfektiivsete predikaatide, samuti

partitiivverbide leksikaalselt piiritletud ajaraamiga predikaatide puhul (vt tegevuslaadide (*Aktionsart*) klassifikatsioon teoses Vendler 1967), täitmata aga aspektiverbide osasihitislike või partitiivverbide imperfektiivsete predikaatide puhul. Seega oleks eesti keeles personaalpassiivi moodustamine aktsepteeritav üksnes perfektiivsete predikaatide põhjal. Autori vastavasisulist hüpoteesi kinnitas ka doktoritöö sissejuhatavas osas kirjeldatud küsimustikuuring, milles eesti keele emakeelena kõnelejatel paluti hinnata eri passiivilausete aktsepteeritavust. Olgugi, et teema vajab põhjalikumat uurimist, kinnitas autori analüüs eesti passiivikonstruktsioonide moodustamisel kehtivat perfektiivse predikaadi nõuet. Kategoriaalselt ebaselgeks jäi tajumist, mõtlemist ja suhtumist väljendavate staatiliste partitiivverbide positsioon. Rühma verbide puhul (sh nt *lootma, himustama, kuulma, kadestama, kahetsema*) ei loetud passiivivorme lubatavaks, samas kui teise rühma puhul (sh nt *alahindama, armastama, austama, ohustama*) möönsid vastajad nende aktsepteeritavust. Siin võib seletus peituda asjaomaste verbide partitsiibivormide adjektivisatsiooniastmes, mis tingib nende passiivivormide moodustamisel keele arengust tulenevalt ajas nihkuva aktsepteeritavuspiiri.

Doktoritöö teine uurimisvaldkond puudutab impersonaali- ja passiivikonstruktsioonide vormilist kattuvust (artikkel III: Torn 2006a). Seoses impersonaali liitaegade ning passiivivormide osalise kattumisega pakub autor välja nende analüüsi lähtuvalt konstruktsioonigrammatika üldistest printsiipidest (Goldberg 1995; Kay and Fillmore 1999), mille kohaselt konstruktsiooni tähendus ei ole tuvastatav üksnes tema osade tähenduste pinnalt, vaid kujuneb vormi ja funktsiooni koosmõjus. Selliselt oleks võimalik vastavate konstruktsioonide moodustamine samadest osistest, kuid seostamine eri omadustega. Partitsiibil üheaegselt nii omadussõnaliste kui ka verbiomaduste esinemist selgitaks Bresnani (1982) partitsiipide adjektivisatsioonireegel, või siis konstruktsioonigrammatiline analüüs, mille kohaselt verbiparadigmas on üksainus *tud*-partitsiibi kirje, milles ei ole määratud omadusi, mis eristavad partitsiipi adjektiivist. Töö selgitab kattuvust eesti keele impersonaali liitaegade ja passiivivormide vahel HPSG (*Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar* – peasõnapõhine fraasistruktuurigrammatika) printsiipide alusel toimiva partitsiibikirjega, mille puhul impersonaali- ja passiivikonstruktsioonid aktiveerivad eri realisatsioonitunnuste kogumid.

Doktoritöö kolmas suurem uurimisvaldkond käsitleb taandatud argumendi realiseerumist agentadverbiaalina ja selle argumendi võimalikke interpretatsioone eesti keele impersonaali- ja passiivikonstruktsioonides (artikkel IV: Torn 2006b, artikkel V: Torn-Leesik ja Vihman 2010). Selles valdkonnas teostatud uurimused keskenduvad nii eesti kirjakeelele kui suulisele kõnele.

Eesti kirjakeele korpusetekstide (1950–1990) põhjal esineb agentadverbiaal *poolt* + omastavakäändeline tegija nii passiivi- kui impersonaalikonstruktsioonides (artikkel IV). Siiski näitab analüüs, et selle kasutusel tuleb nii passiivis kui impersonaalis arvestada teatud piirangutega. Agentadverbiaalina esineb valdavalt mitmuslik nimisõna või kogunimisõna (nt *politsei, kirik, instituut*). Nimetatud asjaolu peegeldab impersonaaliga seostatud indefiniitse inimreferentsi nõuet (mis

ei ole üldjuhul passiivile iseloomulik piirang). Ainsuslikud agentadverbiaalid on harvad ning osutavad reeglina võimupositsioonil olevale isikule. Laiem ainsusliku agentadverbiaali kasutus impersonaalikonstruktsioonides on täheldatav seadusandlikes tekstides (*Paki sisu kontrollitakse enne selle üleandmist vahistatule vanglaametniku poolt ja paki saaja juuresolekul),* ent tuleneb sel juhul eesti õiguskeele konventsioonist, mille kohaselt olukorras, kus ainsuse ja mitmuse eristamisel puudub õiguslik tähendus, eelistatakse ainsuslikku vormi[49], ning omab samuti üldisikulist interpretatsiooni. Teine oluline piirang peegeldub asjaolus, et agentadverbiaal esineb peaaegu eranditult ainult transitiivse verbi põhjal moodustatud impersonaalikonstruktsioonides. Agentadverbiaali kasutus eeldab transitiivset verbi – kuna transitiivsel verbil on mitu argumenti, võib suhtlusolukord tingida vajaduse täpsustada agendi- ja patsiendirollide jaotumist. Intransitiivsete verbide impersonaalivormide puhul on agentadverbiaali kasutus üldjuhul välistatud, kuna vastav vajadus verbisemantikast lähtuvalt puudub.

Analüüsi tulemusi kinnitab autori läbi viidud küsimustikuuring eesti keele emakeelena kõnelejate seas. Uuringus kasutatud testlaused pärinesid enamuses korpusematerjalist (või olid koostatud selle eeskujul). Autori konstrueeritud olid vaid intransitiivsete verbide impersonaalvorme testivad näited. Korpuses vastavaid näiteid praktiliselt ei esinenud, autori konstrueeritud näidete osas leidis 93,8 % vastanutest, et niisugune kasutus on ebagrammatiline (vrd sama hinnangu andmine transitiivsete näidete osas vaid 41,5 % poolt osalejatest).

Sarnased – olgugi et mitte nii ranged – piirangud paistavad analüüsitud materjali põhjal kehtivat ka passiivi osas. Siingi on paljudes näidetes tegemist mitmuslike, kollektiivsete, või pragmaatilisel tasandil üldisikulise interpretatsiooni saavate referentidega. Kuigi agentadverbiaali lubatavuse osas eesti keeles paistab emakeelsete kõnelejate hinnang olema positiivne, leidis siiski peaaegu 41,7 % vastanutest, et nemad vastavat täiendust passiivikonstruktsioonile ei lisaks.

Artikkel V (Torn-Leesik ja Vihman 2010) keskendub implitsiitse tegija-argumendi võimalikele interpretatsioonidele eesti suulises kõnes esinevates impersonaali-konstruktsioonides. Uurimus on läbi viidud kahe eri formaalsusastmega korpuse andmestikul: eesti kõnekeele korpus ja Riigikogu toimetamata stenogrammide andmebaas. Uurimuse tulemuste põhjal toovad autorid välja viis peamist interpretatsiooni impersonaalikonstruktsiooni tegija osas. Need on: 1) universaalne (üldisikuline), 2) piiritletult eksistentsiaalne (*vague existential*) või konkretiseeritult eksistentsiaalne (*specific existential*), 3) korporatiivne ning 4) tulevikulis-hüpoteetiline. Uurimuse tulemused on olulised, sest osutavad eesti kõnekeeles kasutatavate impersonaalikonstruktsioonide teoorias käsitletust laiemale kasutusalale ning tõstatavad seega küsimuse vajadusest eesti keele osas teoreetilist raamistikku (vt nt Comrie 1977, Givón 1982 ja Pihlak 1993, kes

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[1] Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus nr 180 (22.12.2011) „Hea õigusloome ja normitehnika eeskiri", § 15 lg 4 (05.12.2015 kehtivas redaktsioonis).

näevad tegija taandamist või tahaplaanile viimist impersonaali ühe põhifunktsioonina) kohandada.

Universaalse interpretatsiooni puhul kirjeldab impersonaalvorm (analoogselt Shore (1988) I prototüübiga, mille puhul inimtegija saab kontekstis lubatud piirides maksimaalse ulatusega tõlgenduse) üldiselt tavaksolevat käitumist või tegevust (1).

(1)   *aga `millest see tuleb, kas see tulene:b kodusest `kasvatusest või elementaarsest `viisakusest, et vastu- `vastutulijale öeldakse kodurajoonis `tere näiteks*

Uuritud materjali põhjal on impersonaalikonstruktsioonide puhul sagedaseim eksistentsiaalne interpretatsioon (vrd Shore 1988 II prototüüp – „kindlaksmääramata isikuterühm"), mis ei avarda tegija tähendust üldisikuliseks, vaid viitab piiritletud isikuterühmale (piiritletult eksistentsiaalne) või ka konkreetsele isikule (konkretiseeritult eksistentsiaalne). Esimese puhul (2) on implitsiitse tegija-argumendi referent täpselt määratlemata, teise puhul aga konkreetselt identifitseeritav (3).

(2)   a. *on `sissemurdmisi= ja (.) `väljastpoolt lõhutakse mõnikord =mõnikord `haknad ära.*

(3)   *ja=sis lugesin head artiklit. (.) $ vist Pere ja Kodu ajakirjast, kus oli ka $ (.) `loed ja noh nagu täielik `idüll tundub kõik, et perel on mingisugune oma `maja=ja (.) ja tuleb välja=et (.) `iga reede tehakse `suurkoristus ja ja `mees ka koristab [jõle `hoolega ja kõik on väga ilus*

Üldjuhul kehtib ka eksistentsiaalse interpretatsiooni puhul nõue [+mitmus] (mille puhul referentide väli on piiratud), ent teatud juhtudel on võimalik sellest mööda minna ning konstrueerida tõlgendus, mille referent on ainsuslik ja identifitseeritav (3). Niisugune impersonaalikasutus (mis referendi sisuliselt määratleb ja seeläbi esile toob) on vastuolus impersonaali kesksete tunnustega (tegija-argumendi üldistamine või taandamine tagaplaanile) ning vajab seega kontekstis eripõhjendust.

Uuritud materjali põhjal on impersonaalikonstruktsioonide puhul sagedane ka korporatiivne interpretatsioon, mille referendiks on sotsiaalselt määratud isikuterühm (valitsus, muu riigivõimu teostav organ, asutus või institutsioon). Vaatamata teatud sarnasusele piiritletult eksistentsiaalse interpretatsiooniga võib korporatiivse interpretatsiooni lugeda iseseisvaks kategooriaks, sest ta on selgelt eristatav ka olukordades, kus referenti ei ole väljendatud. Samuti kasutatakse korporatiivset interpretatsiooni olukordades, kus institutsioonilisi tegijaid on palju või nad jäävad kõneleja jaoks kaugeks ning on raskesti määratletavad (4):

(4)   *meile või- õpetajatele võimaldati minna (.) psühholoogiakursustele kahepäevastele kool maksis selle `kinni= ja.*

Viimane rühm interpretatsioone uuritud materjalis on tulevikulis-hüpoteetilised. Need hõlmavad irreaalseid predikaate (viitavad hüpoteetilistele sündmustele või referentidele). Teistest interpretatsioonikategooriatest eristab neid peamiselt see, et tegija ei ole lihtsalt määratlemata või tagaplaanile taandatud, vaid on määramatu. Seega on impersonaali kasutuspõhjendus niisugustel juhtudel erinev piiratult eksistentsiaalset interpretatsiooni tingivate kontekstide omast.

(5)   *mis: ta: `lassoga hakatakse `hambaid välja tõmba[ma= võ.]*

Artiklis V esitatud uurimus näitab, et suulises kõnes võimaldab implitsiitne tegijaargument mitmekesisemat interpretatsiooni, kui seni on arvatud. Uurimuses välja toodud senise teoreetilise raamistikuga hõlmamata interpretatsioonijuhud heidavad uut valgust impersonaalikonstruktsioonide kasutusalale eesti keeles. Lisaks osutab uurimus, et suulises kõnes esineb agentadverbiaal passiivi- ja impersonaalikonstruktsioonides harva ning realiseerub peamiselt adessiivivormis.

Doktoritöö neljas valdkond puudutab tegumoe omandamist eesti keelt esimese keelena kõnelevate laste seas. Artiklis VI (Vija, Torn-Leesik ja Pajusalu 2009) esitatud uurimus koosneb kahest osast: CHILDES-i korpuse eesti laste keelematerjali analüüsist ja 4–6-aastaste eesti laste seas läbi viidud mõistmiskatse tulemuste analüüsist. Mõlemal juhul vaadeldi tegumoekonstruktsioone, mõistmiskatse sisaldas ka teisi lausetüüpe, nt SVO, OSV.

CHILDES-i korpuse keelematerjali analüüsi tulemuste põhjal võib väita, et esimesed impersonaali- ja passiivikonstruktsioonid ilmuvad lapse keelde suhteliselt vara (pärast teist sünnipäeva), kuid muutuvad suhteliselt sagedamaks alles kolmeaastaselt. Valdavalt moodustavad lapsed impersonaalivorme transitiivverbidest. *Tud*-partitsiipi kasutavad lapsed ja täiskasvanud markeerimaks millegi valmimist. Selline resultatiivsustähendus on omane eesti keele passiivile. Lapse ja täiskasvanu vahelises vestluses kasutatakse impersonaalivorme eelkõige geneerilistes kontekstides tavapärase käitumise väljendamiseks, sealhulgas ka ühiskonna käitumisnormide esitamiseks. Teine oluline kontekstitüüp impersonaalivormide kasutuses on narratiivides ja olukorrakirjeldustes väheoluliste tegijate sooritatud/sooritatava tegevuse väljendamine.

Mõistmiskatse tulemused osutavad omakorda, et vanuses 4–6 aastat mõistavad lapsed impersonaalseid ja passiivilauseid küllaltki hästi. Ühelt poolt oli see loomulik, kuna lapsed juba varasemas eas neid vorme produktiivselt moodustavad, samas vajas impersonaali mõistmine siiski kontrollimist, sest varasemad impersonaalikasutused oleksid võinud olla ka niivõrd seotud konkreetse situatsiooniga, et abstraktses katseolukorras ei oleks lapsed pruukinud neid mõista. Kokkuvõtvalt võib tõdeda, et mõlema uurimuse tulemused viitavad sellele, et eesti lapsed omandavad eesti keele tegumoekonstruktsioonid (eriti impersonaali) suhteliselt vara. Põhjus selle varajase omandamise taga võrreldes passiivi omandamisega indoeuroopa keeltes võib olla seotud eesti impersonaali struktuurilise erinevusega asjaomastest passiivikonstruktsioonidest. Sisuliselt oleks siin

peamiseks põhjuseks tõenäoliselt see, et eesti impersonaali puhul säilib verbi valents ning konstruktsioon säilitab oma iseloomu aktiivikonstruktsioonina, samas kui passiivi moodustamisel muutub verbi valents ning lause põhiliikmete roll. Täiendav põhjus võib seisneda selles, et eesti keeles kasutavad hooldajad lastega suhtlemisel impersonaali teatud situatsioonides sageli ning see aitab kaasa konstruktsiooni varajasele omandamisele.

Doktoritöö täpsustab impersonaali moodustamisel kehtivaid piiranguid, võrdleb neid passiivi moodustamisel rakenduvate piirangutega ning näitab, et impersonaali kasutus eesti suulises keeles on funktsionaalselt laiem, kui seda eeldavad senised teoreetilised käsitlused. Samuti osutab töö täiendava uurimise vajadusele nii impersonaalset kui ka passiivset tõlgendust võimaldavate konstruktsioonide puhul ning eesti passiivikonstruktsioonide moodustamisel ja kasutamisel rakenduvate piirangute puhul. Doktoritööst nähtub, et eesti impersonaali on põhjust käsitleda passiivist olemuslikult erineva (aktiivi)konstruktsioonina ning mitmed teoreetilised raamistikud vajaksid seega eesti keele osas kohandamist. Lisaks on töö kasutatav rahvusvaheliselt kättesaadava allikmaterjalina keeltevaheliseks tegumoekonstruktsioonide võrdluseks.

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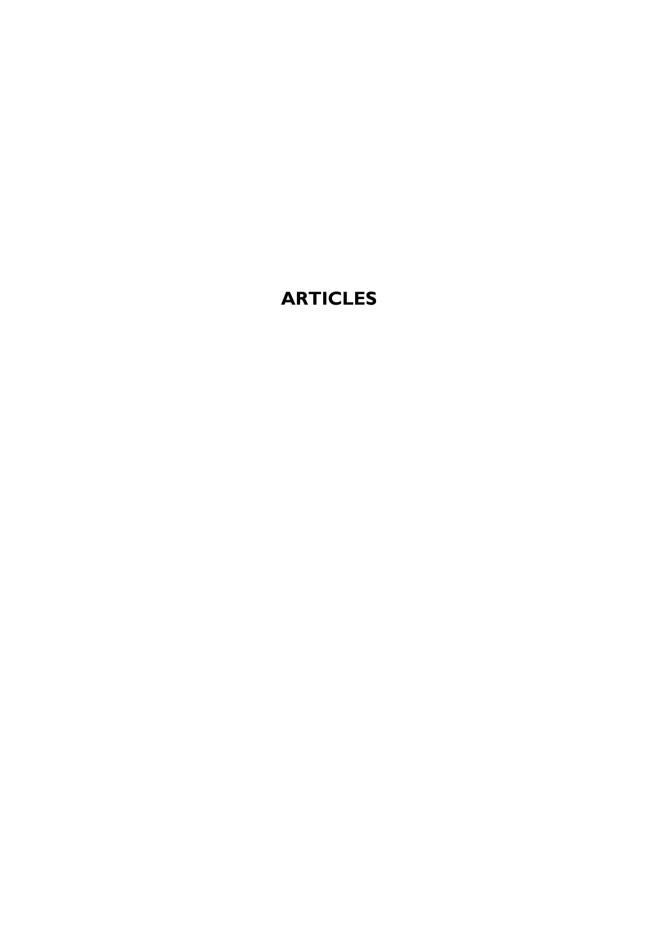
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ARTICLES

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Reeli Torn-Leesik
Citizenship: Estonian
Date of birth: October 13th, 1973
Address: Department of English, College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, University of Tartu, Lossi 3
Telephone: (+372) 7375218
E-mail: reeli.torn-leesik@ut.ee

Education:

2004–	University of Tartu, doctoral studies (General Linguistics)
2002	University of Tartu, MA in English Language and Literature, *cum laude*
2001	University of Cambridge, MPhil in English and Applied Linguistics
2000	University of Tartu, English Language Teacher's Certificate from the Teacher Training Programme for English Language, *cum laude*
1998	University of Tartu, BA in English Language and Literature, *cum laude*
1992	Kuressaare Secondary School No 1, *silver medal*

Professional experience:

2014 spring	on maternity leave
2010–	lecturer of English (1.0), Department of English, Institute of Germanic, Romance and Slavonic Languages and Literatures, University of Tartu
2010–2012	on maternity leave
2008–2010	lecturer of English (1.0), Department of English, University of Tartu
2008–2008	research fellow (1.0); Department of English, University of Tartu
2007–2008	research fellow (0.50), Graduate School of Linguistics and Technology, University of Tartu
2007–2007	research fellow (0.15), Graduate School of Linguistics and Technology, University of Tartu
2006–2008	research fellow (0.35), Department of English, University of Tartu
2006–2008	lecturer of English (0.5), Department of English, University of Tartu
2006–2006	lecturer of English (0.85), Department of English, University of Tartu
2005–2007	research fellow (0.15), Graduate School of Linguistics and Technology

2005–2006	research fellow (0.85), Department of English, University of Tartu
2002–2005	lecturer of English, Department of English, University of Tartu
2000–2001	leave of absence for MPhil studies at the University of Cambridge
1999–2002	assistant lecturer of English, Department of English, University of Tartu
1997–1999	librarian (0.5), Department of English, University of Tartu
1992–1993	teacher of English, Kuressaare Secondary School No. 1

ELULOOKIRJELDUS

Nimi: Reeli Torn-Leesik
Kodakondsus: Eesti
Sünniaeg: 13. oktoober 1973
Aadress: Tartu Ülikool, inglise filoloogia õppetool, maailma keelte ja kultuuride kolledž, Lossi 3
Telefon: (+372) 7375218
E-post: reeli.torn-leesik@ut.ee

Haridus:
2004–   Tartu Ülikool, doktoriõpe (üldkeeleteadus)
2002   Tartu Ülikool, MA inglise keele ja kirjanduse erialal, *cum laude*
2001   Cambridge'i ülikool, MPhil inglise keele ja rakenduslingvistika erialal
2000   Tartu Ülikool, õpetaja kutsetunnistus: põhikooli ja gümnaasiumi inglise keele õpetaja, *cum laude*
1998   Tartu Ülikool, BA inglise keele ja kirjanduse erialal, *cum laude*
1992   Kuressaare 1. Keskkool, *hõbemedal*

Teenistuskäik:
2014 kevadest   lapsehoolduspuhkusel
2010–   inglise filoloogia lektor (1,0), inglise filoloogia osakond, germaani, romaani ja slaavi filoloogia instituut, Tartu Ülikool
2010–2012   lapsehoolduspuhkusel
2008–2010   inglise filoloogia lektor (1,0), inglise filoloogia osakond, Tartu Ülikool
2008–2008   erakorraline teadur (1,0); inglise filoloogia osakond, Tartu Ülikool
2007–2008   erakorraline teadur (0,50), keeleteaduse ja -tehnoloogia doktorikool, Tartu Ülikool
2007–2007   erakorraline teadur (0,15), keeleteaduse ja -tehnoloogia doktorikool, Tartu Ülikool
2006–2008   erakorraline teadur (0,35), inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool
2006–2008   inglise filoloogia lektor (0,5), inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool
2006–2006   inglise filoloogia lektor (0,85), inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool
2005–2007   erakorraline teadur (0,15), keeleteaduse ja -tehnoloogia doktorikool, Tartu Ülikool
2005–2006   erakorraline teadur (0,85), inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool

2002–2005	lektor, inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool
2000–2001	palgata puhkus (sept.-juuni) seoses magistriõpingutega Cambridge'i ülikoolis
1999–2002	assistent, inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool
1997–1999	raamatukoguhoidja, inglise filoloogia õppetool, Tartu Ülikool
1992–1993	inglise keele õpetaja, Kuressaare 1. Keskkool

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