ON IMPERSONAL REFLEXIVES IN ROMANCE AND SLAVIC
AND SEMANTIC VARIATION *

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0. Introduction.
This paper deals with impersonal se/si/się in Romance and Slavic. It shows that in its impersonal use, the reflexive clitic of Italian, Polish, and Spanish displays identical properties, except for a striking difference that separates the Slavic language from Romance. It is argued that this contrast is due to parametric variation in semantics, which affects the impersonal as indefinite pronoun. This proposal should be of interest for linguistic theory for several reasons. One is that parametric variation has received less attention in semantics than in syntax, and needs to be explored. Another one is that the functional categories are the traditional locus of syntactic variation, and it seems that semantic variation may also reside in them, in particular in clitics such as se/si/się.

Romance and Slavic reflexive clitics share many uses illustrated in (1) with Spanish and Polish. All languages display the uses often called (a) reflexive/reciprocal, (b) middle/passive, (c) anticausative/ inchoative/

* This paper has been partially supported by SSHRCC Research Grant 410-97-0242. Partial preliminary versions were presented at Going Romance in Utrecht in 1998, the Fundación Ortega y Gasset in Madrid and the Glow Summer School in Mytilene in 1999, and LSRL 30 and the Universities of Brasilia and Campinas in 2000. I am grateful to the various audiences for useful comments, and most thankful to the organizers of LSRL 30 for inviting me, which gave me the nostalgic opportunity to return to the site of the first Romance Symposium, where I also participated (Rivero 1972). Special thanks go to G. Chierchia for reasons that will be evident by sect. 3. M. Sheppard and I are researching this topic in Slavic (Rivero & Sheppard 1999), and I thank her for discussion and for information on Slovenian. I owe many thanks to A. Boron, B. Borsley, M. Goledzinowska, E. Jaworska, A. Przepiórkowski, and E. Willim for Polish, O. Arnaudova for Bulgarian, and C. Diaconescu for Rumanian.
unaccusative/ergative, and (d) inherent/intrinsic. Unless otherwise indicated, from now on, examples are first in Spanish followed by Polish.

(1) a. *Juan* se viste.
    John Refl dresses
    "John gets dressed."

  a’ *Janek* ubiera *się*.
    John dresses Refl
    "John gets dressed."

 b. *Este coche* se conduce fácilmente.
    This car Refl drives easily
    "This car drives easily."

  b’ *Ten samochód* powodzi *się* łatwo.
    This car drives Refl easily
    "This car drives easily."

 c. *El vaso* se rompió.
    The glass Refl broke
    "The glass broke."

  c’ *Szkłanka* *się* rozbiła.
    Glass Refl broke
    "The glass broke."

 d. *María* se asusta de *Juan*.
    Mary Refl fears of John
    "Mary {fears / is afraid of} John."

  d’ *Maria* boi *się* Janka.
    Mary fears Refl John
    "Mary {fears / is afraid of} John."

In Romance, examples similar to (1) could be given in at least French, Italian, Portuguese, and Rumanian. All Slavic languages with reflexive clitics also share these uses (besides Polish, Bulgarian, Croatian / Serbian, Czech, Macedonian, Slovenian, and Slovak).

With the exception of French, all the mentioned languages display the use in (2) with Vs that traditional grammars call intransitive. This use, which serves for the two types of intransitives distinguished in generative grammar (i.e. unergatives (*work*), and unaccusatives (*die*)) has been called impersonal, intransitive, {unaccusative/ergative}, or unergative.

(2) a. *Aquí* se trabaja mucho.
    Here Refl works much
    "Here people work a lot."

 b. *Tutaj* *się* pracuje sporo.
    Here Refl works much
    "Here people work a lot."
It has been argued (Dobrovie-Sorin 1998) that intransitive patterns with reflexive clitics are open to two analyses. In one analysis, they formally resemble the passive/middle patterns above. In the other analysis restricted to the languages with the patterns in (3), they contain what is called in this paper the Nominative Impersonal.

A much debated use glossed with “one” or “people” and dubbed here Nominative Impersonal (also called indefinite, indeterminate, nominative, nominativeless, or subjective) is the topic of this paper, and separates Romance and Slavic into two groups, as in Table 1. In Romance, this use is absent in French and Rumanian, and present in Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, where it consistently cooccurs with a 3S predicate: (3a) among other cases. In Slavic, it is found in Slovenian and Polish, where it cooccurs with a 3S predicate in the Present, and a NEU(ter) predicate in the Past: (3b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>ROM:</td>
<td>Italian; Portuguese; Spanish.</td>
<td>French; Rumanian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA:</td>
<td>Polish; Slovenian.</td>
<td>Bulgarian; Czech; Slovak; Serbo-Croatian (?)</td>
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(3) a. Antes se leía estos libros con placer.
Before Refl read.3S these books with pleasure
“In the past {one/people} read these books with pleasure.”

b. Tę książkę czyta /czytał o się z przyjemnością.
this book.ACC {read.3S/ read.NEU} Refl with pleasure
“One {reads/read} this book with pleasure.”

In dealing with the use in Table 1, this paper develops the syntactic analysis in Rivero (1999) first proposed for Polish, and applies the semantic proposal in (Chierchia 1995) to Spanish and Polish (see also Rivero and Sheppard 1999 for Slavic). This global treatment captures form and meaning characteristics shared by the Romance and Slavic impersonal. In the Yes-languages of Table 1, this analysis also serves for intransitive patterns of type (2). The core syntactic idea in sect. 2.1 is that the impersonal construction is defective in two ways. One, the reflexive clitic signals a defective pronoun or syntactic S(implex) E(xpression) anaphor in the sense of (R(einhart) & R(euland) 1993). Two, in the impersonal construction finite T(ense) is defective. In a few words, clitic se/si/się cooccurs with a null NP, not a DP (Rivero 1999), which is the external argument of the predicate and is located
in the Spec of the VP. This NP has a human feature and no PHI-features, so cannot be interpreted independently (-R). Since T is defective in that it lacks PHI-features, the NP must raise to the ‘base-generated’ clitic to repair its (a) formal and (b) referential deficiency. Movement allows the NP to (a) check Case (NOM(inative)) against the clitic, which removes its uninterpretable feature as formal imperfection, and (b) acquire existential force, which repairs its referential imperfection. More technically, the NP is –R and Nominative, and by raising to the clitic, which also has Case, it becomes the member of a chain with a +R head and a –R tail in the sense of R& R. The impersonal can thus be interpreted as a semantic indefinite pronoun in the sense of (Chierchia 1995), as discussed in sect. 2.2. In sum, the impersonal in (3) and similar cases involves the syntactic chain of a defective human pronoun - a SE-anaphor-, and the semantics of an indefinite with intrinsic existential force. As stated, this analysis covers the intransitive constructions with reflexives of type (2) in the Yes-languages of Table 1, but is not for intransitive constructions in the other languages. The major difference between the two languages in Table 1 then is that the reflexive clitic may stand for a defective nominative human indefinite pronoun only in the first group.

In sect. 3, it is shown how this indefinite pronoun analysis can account for the contrast in (3) vs. (4). The Romance and Polish impersonals display almost identical properties, but differ in a striking way with unselected Datives.

(4) a. Antes se me leía estos libros con placer.
Before Refl me.DAT read.3S these books with pleasure
“Before {one/people} read these books to me with pleasure.”

b. Tę książkę czytał mi się z przyjemnością.
this book.ACC read.NEUT me.DAT Refl with pleasure
Dominant reading: “I (AGENT) read this book with pleasure.”
Dispreferred but possible: “{One/people} read this book to me with pleasure.”

In Sp (4a), the unselected (Ethical) Dative has no effect on se, which translates as “one” or “people”, as in (3a). Polish shares with Spanish the Ethical use of Datives, but in (4b) Dative mi “me” is preferentially interpreted as Agent, which altogether suppresses the impersonal reading in (3b) (and see Dziwirek (1994) for discussion). The Spanish and Polish impersonals are very similar, so the difference in (4) is at first sight unexpected. Rivero
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(1999) suggests that siɛ as impersonal can play an expletive role that is not shared by Romance impersonal se/si. In sect. 3 it is argued that this role is the result of parametric variation in semantics. The impersonal is an existentially quantified indefinite pronoun optionally disclosed by adverbs of quantification that come to bind it, which applies to Italian, Spanish, and Polish. What distinguishes Polish is that the impersonal may also be disclosed by an (unselected) Dative that lends it its content. On this view, the explanation for the contrast in (4a) vs. (4b) is semantic. It arises from the impersonal use of the reflexive clitic, a functional category, coupled to the Ethical Dative. It consists in a specific choice of discloser in Polish. In other syntactic and semantic respects, the impersonal seems very similar in Romance and Polish.

1. Syntactic diagnostics in the Impersonal.

This section develops ideas in (Rivero 1999), outlining some familiar and some unfamiliar syntactic properties of the Impersonal in Table 1 that are important to view it as a defective pronoun or SE-anaphor, as in sect. 2.1. Sect. 2.2. applies the semantic proposal of Chierchia (1995) to Spanish and Polish, adding other meaning characteristics and setting the stage for the explanation of the contrast in (4).

First, two diagnostics of the impersonal construction much debated in generative grammar since (Chomsky 1981) concern case and agreement, and play a part in the present account. Beginning with case, a common assumption is that impersonal se/si/siɛ requires NOM, and a current implementation of this idea will be given in 2.1. That NOM is somehow tied to the impersonal receives support from several phenomena. These include (a) the morphological ACC(usative) on the overt NP in Pol (3b), viewed by many as an indication that the construction is ‘active’ and not ‘passive’, (b) the preposition a preceding the overt NP in Sp (5a), and (c) se / siɛ combined with an ACC clitic in (5b-c).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(5) a. } & \text{ En esta escuela se castiga a los alumnos.} \\
& \text{In this school one punishes the students.} \\
\text{b. } & \text{ Si una niña es mala, se la castiga.} \\
& \text{If a little girl is bad, her punish.3S} \\
\text{c. } & \text{ Jeśli dziewczynka jest niegrzeczna, każę się ją.} \\
& \text{If a little girl is bad, one punishes her.}
\end{align*}
\]
Another factor favoring NOM in (Rivero 1999) is that only those Polish Modals that accept NOM subjects may cooccur with the impersonal. The last factor is a difference in Tough-constructions, which I think has gone unnoticed. In Romance, the overt NP is NOM, (6a), so impersonal versions exist for this construction: (6b).

\[(6)\] 
\[a. \quad \text{Ellos y no ellas son difíciles de contentar.} \] 
They.NOM. and not they.NOM are difficult of please.INF
“The males and not the females are difficult to please.”
\[b. \quad \text{A quindici anni, si è difficile da accontentare.} \] 
Italian At fifteen years, Refl is difficult of please.INF
“At fifteen, one is difficult to please.” (Chierchia 1995)

In Polish, there is no exact equivalent for (6a) with a NOM NP. One grammatical option reminiscent of English \textit{It is difficult to please John} is as in (7a). It has an initial ACC NP scrambled out of the embedded clause that bears the Case required by the lower V. Due to this difference arising from Case, Polish differs from Romance in having no siɛ -impersonal Tough-construction. That is, (7b) is deviant.

\[(7)\] 
\[a. \quad \text{Jana trudno jest zadowolić.} \] 
John.ACC difficult is please.INF
“John is difficult to please.”
\[b. \quad *\text{Trudno siɛ jest zadowolić.} \]

As to agreement, the Romance V is 3S: (3a), (4a), (5a-b). The Slavic V is 3S in the Present - (3b) and (5c)-, and NEU in the Past: (3b-4b). Thus, the tensed item does not agree in Person/Number/Gender with the overt NP, which bears the Theta-role usually assigned to objects, and in Slavic Accusative Case in affirmative clauses, and Genitive Case in negative clauses (Rivero 1999).

Case / agreement in (3-5) are morphological clues to distinguish between impersonal and most notably \{passive / middle\} constructions. The last display a NOM NP, shown morphologically in Polish, and a tensed predicate that agrees with it in PHI-features: (1b-b’).

We know that several Romance and Slavic languages lack the Nominative Impersonal. That is, they do not have a reflexive clitic treated as a defective indefinite human pronoun. These languages fail to display the
case and/or agreement patterns in (3-5), as in Rumanian (8a) and Bulgarian (8b) for (5a).

(8) a. *In şcoală asta se pedepseşte pe elevi. Rumanian in school this Refl punish.3S pe students

b. *V tova učilište učenizite se nakazva. Bulgarian in this school students.the Refl punish.3S

A second diagnostic of *sel sil się in Table 1 has attracted less attention: it can bind or antecede all types of anaphors. If binders must be present in the syntax, then *sel sil się signals a syntactically projected NP in an A-position that binds the anaphor. Italian supports the hypothesis that the impersonal can bind a clitic anaphor. In (9), *si is the impersonal “people”, and *ci the reflexive anaphor “themselves” it binds (since the impersonal follows object clitics in Italian).

(9) Ci *si è lavati. Italian Self-cl Refl be.3S washed.PL

“People washed themselves.” (Chierchia 1995)

Spanish and Polish prohibit *se se / *się się, as noted by Perlmutter (1971) for Spanish. No phonological process changes the shape of those sequences, so the option in (9) is unavailable. However, the impersonal can bind non-clitic local anaphors, such as uno mismo and sobie in (10).

(10) a. Ahora *se piensa sólo en {uno mismo /?si mismo}. b. Teraz *się myśli tylko o sobie. now Refl think.3S only {in/of} oneself

“No one thinks only of oneself.”

The Slavic languages have (long distance) possessive anaphors, and (11) illustrates that the Polish impersonal can antecede this type.

(11) Swoich przyjaciół tak się nie traktuje. POSS friends so Refl Neg treat.3S

“One does not treat one’s friends like that.” (Siewierska 1988)
Italian and Polish have intersentential long distance anaphors like *proprio* and the possessives. The sentences in (12) illustrate that the impersonal can also antecede this type.

(12) a. *Si ritiene (spesso) che *i proprio errori siano piú’ giustificati* believe.3S (often) that the own errors are more justified

*di quelli degli altri.* Italian

than those of the others (Chierchia 1995)

b. *Myśli *ś cię, że *swoje błądy są bardziej* believe.3S Refl that POSS errors are more

usprawiedliwiane niż innych. justified than of others

“People (often) think that their own mistakes are more justified than those of the others.”

Sentences (11) and (12) seem particularly significant for the idea that the impersonal is an (independent) syntactic argument, and not the morphological reflection of a predicate that in the lexicon is inherently reflexive. These two examples involve non-local anaphors, which cannot reflexivize the predicates “treat” and “think” in the sense of R&R’s theory (1993). Since these predicates are not semantically reflexive, *si* and *się* cannot be (redundant) markers of intrinsic reflexivity, which is the analysis often suggested for reflexive clitics in the Romance languages. These examples show the need for two positions in the syntactic structure: (a) one for the impersonal, which is not a reflexivizer nor a marker of lexical reflexivity, and (b) another one for the long distance anaphor.

If the impersonal was seen as only a marker of intrinsic reflexivity, there could be only one argument in sentences like (10a-b), namely the constituent *uno stesso stesso*. However, if (11-12) must contain two argument positions, this option must also be available in (10); thus, here too the impersonal is the binder, and the non-clitic anaphor is what R&R call a SELF-anaphor. In other words, in (10) *uno stesso* and *sobie* are extrinsic markers of reflexivity that reflexivize the predicate “think-of”, which is not intrinsically reflexive.

The Italian impersonal is plural (see below). This allows it to antecede a reciprocal (Belletti 1982), which is excluded in most of the languages in Table 1 (but apparently not in Slovenian, as M. Sheppard points out to me).
The fact in (13) is also significant under the reflexivity theory of binding. On this view, the impersonal serving as antecedent for a reciprocal cannot be a marker of intrinsic or extrinsic reflexivity. This type of example signals more than one syntactic position in the construction, irrespective of how reciprocals, which are not covered by R&R’s theory (1993), are treated.

The Indoeuropeanist tradition relates uses of the reflexive to intransitivity (Schenker 1988 for earlier views on Latin, Romance, and Slavic). In the Romance and the Slavic generative literature, several attempts to unify the many uses of se/si/się rely on some form of reflexivity: the coindexation of two argument positions in the syntax, or the suppression of one of them via intransitivization (Cinque (1988) for references on Romance, and Rivero (1999) for references on Polish). However, the facts just reviewed suggest that reflexivity/intransitivity is unlikely to account for the impersonal, which intuitively does not behave like an anaphor nor an intransitivizer. The proposal in sect. 2.1 is that the impersonal belongs with defective pronouns.

In languages without the impersonal, se is not a binder or antecedent. To illustrate, Bulgarian has possessive anaphors like Polish, but lacks impersonal se. The Bulgarian (passive-middle) se cannot function as the (needed) antecedent, so (14) is deviant and not “One sees one’s pictures with pleasure.”

(14) *Svoite kartini se gledat s udovolstvie. Bulgarian
    POSS pictures Refl see.3P with pleasure

The third characteristic of the impersonal interesting for our purposes concerns Control. It is well known that the impersonal can control into adjuncts, and less known that it can control into passive complements: (15). This diagnostic is significant under the assumption that control into passives must be by an argument present in the syntax (Jaeggli 1986). On this view, the impersonal signals the syntactically projected controller. Given what was said about Case, the controller is NOM, and given binding, it is in the equivalent of a syntactic A-position.

(15) a. Siempre se quiere ser{ admirado / apreciado}. always Refl want.3S be {admired/ appreciated}
b. *Chce sie być {admirewanym/lubianym}.
   want.3S Refl be {admired/liked}
   “One (always) wants to be {admired/liked}.”

The fourth characteristic that plays a role in our analysis has also been noted by many in the past. Similar to arbitrary PRO, impersonal *se/si/się* must denote a human or sentient being such as a personified animal. In an interesting semantic study of the Polish reflexive, Karński (1986, 1992) assigns human aspect to pragmatics, but, here we agree with most in locating it in the semantics of impersonal *se/si/się* (in particular Chierchia 1995). In our view, the only interpretable feature in the impersonal is [+Human/Sentient]. This, coupled to the idea that it is an indefinite, places Sp. *se* in the paradigm of quantificational-like intrinsically human lexical entries such as *alguien* “someone”, *nadie* “no one”, and *quien/quienes* “who”.

The Sp. verb *amanecer* “to dawn” is useful to highlight human aspect, and to show that in the Yes-languages of Table 1, the Nominative Impersonal analysis extends to intransitive Vs (for the languages without impersonal see (Dobrovie-Sorin 1998)). This V need not involve humans/animates, so a common reading for (16a) refers to just the beginning of the day. However, when impersonal *se* is added, as in (16b), reference must be to {humans/personified animals}. This sentence is, for instance, appropriate when speaking to a budgie that chirps happily early in the day.

(16) a. *Hoy amanece bien.*
   today dawn.3S well
   “The day begins well.”

b. *Hoy se amanece bien.*
   today Refl dawn.3S well
   “Today {people/you/we} {wake up / begin the day} well.”

In sect. 3, the {human/sentient} feature acquires additional formal significance when it is argued that the disclosure of the impersonal by the unselected Dative in Polish requires that this feature be matched.

A last characteristic makes the impersonal resemble an ordinary pronoun or indefinite and is that it can usually be assigned or tied to the same semantic (Theta) roles as an ordinary (overt) Nom subject. Among the properties highlighted here, we see next that this is the less general. However, its exceptions are interesting for the general semantic analysis of the impersonal.
First, it is well known that in finite clauses the impersonal in Italian, Spanish, and Polish can combine with all types of V's, including modals, passives, and the copula constructions with adjectives illustrated in (17-18).

(17) Se sì è alti, sì è talvolta anche belli.
If Refl be.3S tall.PL, Refl be.3S often also handsome.PL
“If one is tall, one is often also handsome.”

(18) a. Cuando se es joven, raramente se es feliz.
b. Kiedy się jest młodym, rzadko się jest szczęśliwym.
When Refl be.3S young, seldom Refl be.3S happy
“When one is young, one is seldom happy.”

Copulas with adjectives or participles (i.e. passives) prove significant from several perspectives, and I mention two. One, an important number of adjectives are individual level-predicates, as in the above examples. Thus, when this type of adjective coexists with impersonal se/si/ się, semantically it signals an individual variable in the construction. This fits well with the clues given above indicating that the impersonal is a syntactically projected NP that as argument with a human feature can bind, antecede, and control. I return to this clue immediately below, since there are exceptions to it.

Two, constructions with adjectives or passive participles show a principled morphological connection between the impersonal and arbitrary PRO. The (Present) copula is always 3S in all the languages, but adjectives (or participles) vary to consistently display in each language the morphology also required by arbitrary PRO. In Italian this PRO is masculine/ plural, which is the morphological marking of the adjectives in (17). In Spanish, it is most often masculine/ singular, as with the adjectives in (18a). In Polish, PRO usually cooccurs with a masculine adjective in the Instrumental, which is found in (18b) as well; here NOM would be deviant. The impersonal seems devoid of intrinsic PHI-features, so these agreement patterns are the default setting, and others are possible. Concerning Gender, Sp (or Pol) feminine adjectives are appropriate when a woman is either speaking or spoken to; (19a), for instance, could be used by a male doctor commenting on the fair skin of a female patient. Concerning Number, the Sp impersonal is not incompatible with plurality: (19b); similar examples are possible in Polish.

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1 I omit discussion of nonfinite clauses. In Romance, except for Portuguese, the impersonal is not found in nonfinite clauses ((Dobrovie-Sorin 1998) on Italian), or is very restricted ((Mendikoetxea 1999) on Spanish). In Slavic, it is not found in such clauses (Ruzicka 1992).
(19) a. Cuando se es tan blanca, el sol es peligroso.
When Refl be.3S so white.FEM, the sun is dangerous
“When a woman is so white, the sun is dangerous.”

b. Aquí se entra de dos en dos.
Here Refl go.3S.in of two in two
“Here people go in two by two.”

Copula/adjective constructions as in (17-18-19a) and passives are not found with the impersonal in all the languages of Table 1. In Slavic, Slovenian impersonal se shares the properties above – case / agreement, binding, control, human denotation -, but cannot combine with copulas + adjectives or passives (Rivero and Sheppard 1999). Thus Slovenian (20) is deviant, making this language resemble Bulgarian and Rumanian, two of the languages without the impersonal of Table 1 (that is, languages that have no se that counts as a defective human pronoun in the sense of sect. 2).

(20) *Ko se je mlad, se je srečen. Slovenian
when Refl be.3S young Refl be.3S happy
Intended: “*When one is young, one is happy.”

Diachronic evidence points to the same situation in Romance. Nunes (1991) tells us that the grammarian Said reports that Portuguese passives and copulas combined late with impersonal se, and are found in the literary language only in the 19th century. Thus, for a time Portuguese and Slovenian must have been similar.

A detailed analysis of this restriction is beyond the scope of the present paper, but I sketch a proposal in informal terms. The Slovenian or the earlier Portuguese impersonals display the diagnostics of a syntactically projected NP with all the relevant properties. Thus, they must also correspond to the human indefinite pronoun discussed in section 2; we shall see that this pronoun is a SE-anaphor, and contains an existential quantifier and an individual variable. The restriction seems to be that the Slovenian and earlier Portuguese individual variable in the impersonal use of the reflexive clitic must be licensed by being coupled to a so-called {situation / event} variable. On this view, impersonal sentences with transitive Vs in the active voice, those with unergative Vs such as “work”, and those with unaccusative Vs such as “arrive” all contain a {situation/event} variable needed to license the impersonal as indefinite with its individual variable in Slovenian and earlier
Portuguese. Thus the impersonal can associate with an external Th-role or an internal one, without conflict. However, in constructions of a stative nature, as with the copula and adjectives and passive participles, the situation variable is either absent or inaccessible, and the Slovenian and earlier Portuguese impersonal is rendered illicit. From this perspective, when the impersonal participates in the four symptomatic properties discussed above, it must correspond to an indefinite pronoun with a human individual variable that is syntactically projected. However, in some cases, this variable needs to be supported by a situation variable.2

In sum, the syntactic diagnostics of the impersonal as defective human indefinite pronoun highlighted here as most significant for the analysis in sect. 2 are the following:

I. The impersonal relies on a functional category with the same clitic characteristics as other non-tonic pronouns.

II. It may coexist with an ACC NP, or ACC clitic. In Polish it may appear with a Modal that takes NOM subjects, but not in Tough constructions. Thus, it is related to NOM.

III. It coexists with a tensed predicate without PHI-features, which indicates that T is defective.

IV. It can be a binder or antecedent for many types of anaphors, signaling what amounts to an argument in A-position in the syntax. Long distance anaphors, and reciprocals are of particular importance within reflexivity theory. This is because they indicate two syntactically projected positions, one related to the impersonal (as antecedent), and one related to the long distance anaphor or the reciprocal.

V. It also signals a type of controller that must be syntactically projected and not implicit.

2The proposals on Italian infinitives with si in (Cinque 1988) could be used as a basis to suggest that the Slovenian and (earlier) Portuguese restriction indicates a need for an external Theta-role (Dobrovie-Sorin (1998) for counterproposals). However, I just rejected this option given that Slovenian and earlier Portuguese modals, which may pattern with raising Vs, and unaccusative Vs, not associated with an external Theta-role, easily combine(d) with se. In Portuguese se is found with copula + adjectives and passives late and with unaccusatives early. Nunes (1991: 45) documents it with chegar “arrive” in 1677.

The distinction between individual-level and stage-level predicates does not seem appropriate to capture the Slovenian and earlier Portuguese restriction. Predicates like “intelligent” and “love/hate” are both considered individual-level, but the Slovenian impersonal is problematic with all adjectives and fine with “love/hate”. The distinction (a) between non-states and states, (b) “love/hate” as activity Vs or non-states with a situation variable, and (c) adjectives as statives without this variable seem to capture the difference.
VI. It has no PHI-features of its own, but involves formally encoded {human / sentient} denotation, with possible morphological consequences, as with agreement and case on passive participles and predicative adjectives.

VII. It can be associated with a variety of external and internal Theta-roles held by an (overt) Nom subject. Thus, it is used with many types of predicates to the same effect as full-fledged (NOM) pronouns and indefinites.

Copula + Adjective constructions seem of particular significance for the syntax - semantics interface of the impersonal. Adjectives that are individual-level predicates signal an individual variable when in construction with the impersonal. The individual variable diagnostic fits well with criteria I-VI, which indicate on other grounds that the impersonal is a syntactically projected argument NP with NOM case, a human feature, and can bind, antecede, and control.

The Slovenian and earlier Portuguese impersonal use of the reflexive clitic shares the diagnostics in I-VI, but cannot appear in copula + adjective and passive constructions. In these languages or periods, the impersonal is also a defective indefinite pronoun that contains a quantifier and an individual variable, and is unrestricted as to Theta-role, but can only be licensed with the help of a situation variable.

Romance languages like Rumanian and Slavic languages like Bulgarian do not display these diagnostics because their reflexive clitic is not analyzed as a human defective pronoun, which includes intransitive constructions.

2. The analysis.
2.1. The impersonal as Simplex Expression Anaphor.

Rivero (1999) argues that the properties of the impersonal in sect. 1 can be captured by the assumption that it is a S(implex) E(xpression) anaphor, or defective pronoun, and in this section I summarize this proposal. The idea is implemented by taking the clitic to be {“base generated” / merged} outside the VP, attracting a defective (null) NP that is the external argument of V, so in the equivalent of Spec-of-VP. This movement hypothesis is coupled with (the spirit of) the binding theory of R & R (1993).

On this analysis, the skeleton assumed for the impersonal sentences in (3) is as in (21):

(21) [CLP [CI se/si/siɛ] [TP [T Pres / Past][VP NP1 V NP2]]]

V heads a VP that contains two NP arguments. The “arbitrary” NP1 as external argument is equivalent to a null defective pronoun, different from
little pro: it has a human feature, (structural) NOM Case, but no PHI-features. If this null expression constitutes a syntactic phase, then it should be considered a NP and not just a N (Rivero (1999) for reasons not to see it as a DP), which fits well with the idea that it is a semantic indefinite. The internal argument NP2 is the overt ACC object this/these book(s). The T(ense) P(phrase) is headed by T(ense), which is defective in that it also lacks PHI-features. TP takes VP as complement and V checks features against T. Given that T is defective, V is either 3S or NEU, i.e. without PHI-features. The other functional projection dubbed Cl(itic) P(phrase) is headed by se/si/się. The core idea is that in (21), NP1, which is a syntactically projected argument of the predicate for the reasons stated in sect. 1, must repair deficiencies by raising to (the Specifier of) CIP, checking structural Case. Thus, NP1 in the Impersonal construction contrasts with the null pronoun little pro of the ordinary null subject sentence, which is often assumed to check features with a non-defective T in TP.

The clitic is a functional category directly merged outside of the VP (known as the “base generation” approach), and NP1 raises to it, so let us see why. Chomsky (1998, 1999) proposes two operations to check formal features: MOVE and AGREE, which is more economic. Oversimplifying, a category can MOVE to the Spec of a functional head to check features, or the functional head can check features with a category in its complement via AGREE, without the need for movement. The last operation is preferred. One important question in this framework, then, is why MOVE and not AGREE applies in the impersonal --what forces the deficient NP in (21) to leave the VP. Another important question is why MOVE must target functional se/si/się. Structural Case combined with the lack of PHI-features can provide a formal answer to these questions. In (21), both NP1 and T lack PHI-features. Following Chomsky, this lack of PHI-features signifies that these two categories cannot establish an appropriate checking relation with each other. Thus, I propose that the required relation is established between NP1 and the clitic, when the first moves to the second. These categories are each equipped with a structural Case feature, which allows them to match for checking (for further discussion (Rivero 1999)). In brief, absence of PHI-features on both the clitic and the verb, two prominent characteristics of the impersonal construction, makes the NP raise to CL to satisfy formal needs (feature checking for Case).

Now consider binding, the other dimension in the analysis. R&R (1993: sect.1) distinguish between Pronouns, SELF-anaphors, and SE-anaphors, with two features: Refl(exivizing function) and R(eferential Independence).
Pronouns such as *him* in *John hates him* are not reflexivizers and contain PHI-features, which allows them to be interpreted independently: [–Refl; +R]. SELF-anaphors such as *himself* in *John hates himself* are referentially defective, and reflexivizers [+Refl; –R]. SE-anaphors are like pronouns in not being reflexivizers, and like SELF-anaphors in not having a full specification of PHI-features, so cannot be interpreted independently: [–Refl; –R]. The content necessary for their interpretation is obtained via movement, which makes them similar in feature specification to a pronoun: [+R; –Refl]. Dutch *zich* is a SE-anaphor. It does not make a predicate reflexive when in one of its argument positions: *Max haat zich / Max hates SE-anaphor*. It lacks PHI-features, so it cannot be interpreted independently. However, it can obtain the feature specification necessary for its interpretation by movement. In *Max legt het boek achter zich* “Max puts the book behind him=Max”, *zich* adjoins in LF to I (= T) to inherit subject features (1993:659), which results in a well-formed A-chain that is +R and Case-Marked: *Max zich-legt het boek achter t*. The movement does not make the predicate *put* reflexive, but coindexes *zich* with *Max* as subject. In sum, for R&R a SE-anaphor is a defective pronoun that repairs deficiency by acquiring PHI-features via a LF movement that coindexes it with the subject.

The impersonal use of *si*/śi* się* is comparable to a Dutch SE-anaphor in three ways, but there are interesting differences. One, since the null NP in (21) lacks PHI-features, it does not project an argument that can be interpreted independently. Two, movement enables this NP to obtain the content for its interpretation. R&’R’S SE-anaphors adjoin to I to inherit the PHI-features of the subject, which makes them (a) “subject-oriented”, and (b) interpretable as ordinary personal pronouns with a full set of PHI-features. However, our defective NP repairs its deficiency by moving to CliticP with *si* /śi* się*, which lacks PHI-features. The movement in the impersonal construction is thus different from the movement in the Dutch sentence above, but achieves the same syntactic result, which is to create a well-formed LF-chain that can serve as input for semantic interpretation. For R & R, an A-chain is well formed if it is +R and Case-Marked. In our case, the movement of the PHI-less NP up to the clitic ensures that it can be considered +R, which allows it to be interpreted in the way to be discussed in 2.2. Since the NP checks Case, the chain is also Case-Marked. The similarity between the SE-anaphors involving a clitic as target and the Dutch SE-anaphors, which need not involve a clitic, is that movement of a PHI-less NP in an argument position of a predicate results in a chain that is interpretable at LF. The third aspect that makes the impersonal like a SE-anaphor is the Binding Theory, highlighting
its pronominal character: impersonal *se*/si/**ś** is a clear pronoun. SE-anaphors pattern with pronouns in that they occur in an argument position of a predicate without making this predicate reflexive. On this view, the defective null NP that serves as double for the clitic in the impersonal use patterns like a pronoun. It fits in unproblematic ways traditional principle B (Chomsky 1981): a pronoun is free in its governing category. Alternatively, following R&R, the impersonal does not make the predicate reflexive when it occurs in one of its argument position (i.e. if used impersonally the reflexive clitic corresponds to “one, people”). R&R propose no principle to prevent a SE-anaphor from being free, and we saw above that Dutch *zich* is coindexed with the subject not because of the binding theory, but due to the movement for PHI-features. The impersonal uses of *se*/si/**ś** behave like pronouns rather clearly. Intuitively speaking, they are “antecedentless” expressions. These uses, then, are pronominal as they indicate a SE-anaphor, which does not reflexivize the predicate (–Refl), and repairs referential deficiency by moving to *se*/si/**ś** (in R&R’s terms, the null NP changes its value from [–R] to [+R] when it raises to the clitic).

In sum, *se*/si/**ś** with a NOM feature is merged in CL. There is a NP in the sentence without PHI-features, so it cannot enter into an AGREE relation with T, which also lacks PHI-features. The NP checks Case by MOVING to *se*/si/**ś**. This operation results in a LF-chain interpreted as an expression with a pronominal and a human character, which is the impersonal as SE-anaphor.

### 2.2. The impersonal as indefinite pronoun (Chierchia 1995)

In the analysis in 2.1. the NP in (21) moves to the “base-generated” clitic. This results in a LF chain that is well-formed, providing an appropriate input for later levels of semantic interpretation. What are the semantics of the impersonal? Chierchia (1995) argues that Italian impersonal *si* is an indefinite pronoun. This hypothesis is compatible with our syntactic proposals, can serve for Spanish and Polish (and see (Rivero and Sheppard 1999) for more details, and discussion of Slovenian), and captures important interpretive parallelisms shared by the Romance and Slavic impersonal.

In my view, the Polish and Spanish impersonals as indefinite pronouns do not differ from their Italian counterpart. Thus, in this section I illustrate the gist of Chierchia’s proposal via these languages, concentrating on aspects that play a role in sect. 3 (the reader is referred to Chierchia’s work for the full-fledged proposal).
Four aspects in the semantics of the impersonal will help us understand in sect. 3 the role of unselected Datives in Polish. One, the impersonal is an indefinite pronoun with a sortal restriction (i.e. human). This fits well with the proposal in 2.1. that it is a SE-anaphor with a formally encoded human feature.

Two, in the line of Frege, Russell, and dynamic semantics, Chierchia takes indefinites to have intrinsic existential force. By contrast, in her well known proposal, Heim (1982) sees them as free variables without quantificational force. The idea that indefinites have force also fits well with the syntax in 2.1, suggesting why a clitic is needed in the impersonal reading. The movement in 2.1. forms a chain whose head combines the raised human NP and a clitic equivalent to an operator that provides force, and the foot contains a trace (or copy) that counts as a variable. Thus, the syntactic chain shares A and A-bar characteristics. On the one hand, it is pronoun of the SE-anaphor type, or an A-chain involving the Case system and formal feature-checking, as in traditional NP-movement. On the other hand, it is an A-bar chain or an indefinite with existential force, involving variable binding, as in traditional Quantifier Raising.

Three, while indefinites are intrinsically existential in this analysis, they may be disclosed by adverbs of quantification that come to bind them, so show quantificational variability.

Four, the disclosure procedure is optional, so the impersonal may preserve its own force in the contexts where it could be subject to variability. By contrast, for Heim (1982), indefinites must get their force from adverbs of quantification, or undergo existential closure by default at the text level.

Let us now briefly illustrate each point, giving partial motivation. The impersonal is a pronoun, so can antecede itself, as in (22). Thus, it escapes Heim’s Novelty Condition for indefinites, which covers cases like If a player does not play well, {he /*a player} loses. For Chierchia, the Novelty Condition is not independent, but a consequence of principle C for NPs (Chomsky 1981), which does not regulate pronouns.

(22) a. Si se juega mal, siempre se pierde.
   b. Jeśli się gra zle, zawsze się przegrywa.
   If Refl plays badly, always Refl loses
   “If one plays poorly, one always loses.”

The impersonal is an indefinite, so displays quantificational variability. In the conditional sentences in (22–24), the impersonal coupled with always
may be equivalent to everyone: (22). When coupled to usually, it may be
equivalent to many people, (23), and when coupled to seldom it may be
equivalent to few people: (24). On this view, (22-24) are roughly equivalent
in truth conditions to the relative constructions in (25-27).

(23) a. Si se juega mal, normalmente se pierde.
       Jeśli się gra zle, zazwyczaj się przegrywa.
       If Refl plays badly, usually Refl loses
       “If one plays poorly, one usually loses.”

(24) a. Si se juega mal, raramente se pierde.
       Jeśli się gra zle, rzadko się przegrywa.
       If Refl plays badly, seldom Refl loses
       “If one plays poorly, one seldom loses.”

(25) a. Todo el que juega mal pierde.
       Wszyscy, którzy grają zły przegrywają.
       Everyone who plays poorly loses

(26) a. Muchos que juegan mal pierden.
       Wielu ludzi, którzy grają zły przegrywają.
       Many people who play poorly lose

(27) a. Pocos que jueguen mal pierden.
       Niewielu ludzi, którzy grają zły przegrywają.
       Few people who play poorly lose

Indefinites may display variability when disclosed by adverbs of
quantification, as in (22-24), but have intrinsic existential force. Disclosure
is optional, so in a conditional sentence with an adverb of quantification as in
(28), the impersonal may still retain existential force. When each impersonal
clitic preserves its force, the disjoint reference reading arises; that is, those
who explain the problems and those who do not understand need not be the
same. If impersonals were free variables receiving force from the adverb,
they would be semantically forced to covary in this sentence.

(28) a. Si se explica los problemas tan mal, normalmente no se los
       entender.
       If Refl explains the problems so bad, usually not Refl them
       understands

b. Jeśli tłumaczy się ćwiczenia tak zły, zazwyczaj nie
       If explains Refl problems so badly, usually not
rozumie się ich.
understands Refl them
“If one explains problems so badly, usually they are not understood.”

In sum, this briefest of illustrations with Spanish and Polish of some features in Chierchia’s proposal highlights the semantic parallelism of the Slavic and the Romance impersonals. Combined with the syntactic similarities of sect. 1, the shared semantics suggest an almost complete identity between the three languages. The next section looks at a contrast that breaks this parallelism, arguing that it is due to parametric variation in the semantics of the impersonal as indefinite.

3. The impersonal and semantic variation.
Sp. and Pol. “bare” impersonal constructions such as (3) partially repeated now as (29a) and (30a) share syntax and semantics.

(29) a. Antes se leía estos libros con placer.
Before Refl read.3S these books with pleasure
“Before {one/people} read these books with pleasure.”
b. Se trabaja bien.
Refl work.3S well “One/people work(s) well.”

(30) a. Tę książkę czytał się z przyjemnością.
this book.ACC read.NEU Refl with pleasure
“{One/people} read this book with pleasure.”
b. Pracuje się dobrze.
work.3S Refl well
“One/people work(s) well.”

However, when unselected Datives are added, as in (31), a clear contrast arises. This contrast also affects intransitives, as in (29b-30b) vs. (32).

(31) a. Antes se me leía estos libros con placer.
Before Refl me.DAT read.3S these books with pleasure
“Before {one/people} read these books to me with pleasure.”
b. Tę książkę czytała mi się z przyjemnością.
this book.ACC read.NEU me.DAT Refl with pleasure
Dominant reading: “I (Agent) read this book with pleasure.”
Dispreferred but possible: “’’{One/people} read this book to
me with pleasure.”

(32) a.  
\[
\text{A Juan se le trabaja bien.} \\
\text{John.DAT Refl him.DAT work.3S well} \\
\text{“One works well on John’s behalf.”}
\]

b.  
\[
\text{Jankowi pracuje się dobrze.} \\
\text{John.DAT work.3S Refl well} \\
\text{“John works well.”}
\]

Spanish and Polish share a use of Datives called the Ethical Dative or the Dative of Interest. However, in Sp (31a) and (32a), the unselected Dative has no effect on the impersonal, while in Polish it strongly suppresses the impersonal reading. In (31b) and (32b), the much preferred interpretation is with the Dative as Agent. That is, the speaker read a precise book in (31b), and John is a good worker in (32b).

The Polish Dative strategy extends to sentient beings, as in (33a-b), and excludes inanimates, as in (33c).

(33) a.  
\[
\text{Koniom dziś się <le ciagnęło wóz.} \\
\text{Horses.DAT today Refl badly pull.NEU cart.ACC} \\
\text{“The horses had a hard time pulling the cart today.”}
\]

b.  
\[
\text{Psu się niewygodnie śpi w obroży.} \\
\text{Dog.DAT Refl uncomfortably sleeps in collar} \\
\text{“The dog must be uncomfortable sleeping in a collar.”}
\]

c.  
\[
\text{*Półce ciężko się wisiało na cianie.} \\
\text{shelf.DAT hard Refl hang.NEU on wall} \\
\text{Intended: “*The shelf had difficulty hanging on the wall.”}
\]

Example (33a) has a syntactic parallel in Sp (34a). This has the (odd) reading that someone experienced difficulty when pulling the cart for the benefit of the horses; that is, Sp. impersonal se retains its flavor, and the Dative phrase is a Benefactive. The idea in (33a) could be expressed as in (34b) with “the horses” in the Dative. As in Polish (33a), in (34b) either personal feelings are attributed to the animals, or the speaker commiserates with them. However, (34b) is not a construction with (impersonal) se, highlighting the difference between Polish and Spanish in this grammar area.

(34) a.  
\[
\text{A los caballos hoy se les tiró mal del carro.} \\
\text{the horses.DAT today Refl they.DAT pulled.3S}
\]
bad of the cart
“Today someone had a hard time pulling the cart for the horses.”

b. *A los caballos hoy les fue mal*

the horses.DAT today they.DAT went bad

*al tirar del carro.*

at the pull of the cart

“Today, things went bad for the horses when pulling the cart.”

How can such a striking contrast come about? Rivero (1999) suggests that the Polish and Romance impersonals are *pronouns* in the sense of the discussion in 2.1; in Polish, this pronoun has an expletive use absent from Romance. Here, I elaborate on this suggestion, proposing that it represents parametric variation in the semantics of the impersonal as *indefinite pronoun* in the sense of 2.2. The idea is that the Polish impersonal can be disclosed not only by adverbs of quantification, which makes it similar to its Italian and Spanish counterparts, but also by unselected Datives, which distinguishes it from Romance (and other Slavic languages (Rivero 1999)). In this analysis, the contrast in (31-32) combines the following aspects. One, it is located in the semantics. Two, it is located in the impersonal use of the reflexive clitic, which is a functional category. Three, it consists of a language specific choice in Polish of discloser–binder. Namely, in this language Datives are added to the UG list of disclosers.

Let us begin by showing that the contrast in (31-32) is closely tied to the impersonal —i.e. *się* as syntactic and semantic indefinite pronoun—, and not just to the Dative of Interest. Recall that the anticausative or inchoative use of the reflexive in (35) is shared by Romance and Slavic, including languages without the impersonal such as Bulgarian. This use best observed in episodic sentences, displays a NOM NP and a predicate that agrees with it in PHI-features, and crucially lacks a {([human/sentient]) Agent or Causer.

(35) a. *Se rompieron las gafas.*

Reflected broke.PL the glasses

b. *Złamaly się okulary.*

Broke.FEM.PL Refl glasses.FEM.PL

c. *Scupixa se očilata.*

Broke.PL Refl glasses.the

‘The glasses broke.’
Spanish, Polish, and Bulgarian share a productive Ethical Dative, which can combine with this anticausative reflexive, as in (36).

(36) a. A Juan se le rompieron las gafas.
    John.DAT Refl him.DAT broke.PL the glasses
b. Jankowi złamaly się okulary.
    John.DAT broke.FEM.PL Refl glasses.FEM.PL
c. Na Ivan mu se šupixa očilata.
    John.DAT him.DAT Refl broke.PL glasses
    “The glasses broke on John” or “John accidentally broke his/the glasses.”

The semantic effect of the Dative in (36) is the same in the three languages. John is somehow affected by the breaking event, but need not be either the Agent or the Possessor of the glasses. Thus the Ethical Dative strategy in (36) is shared, but it differs in important ways from the Polish strategy in (31-32), which is not shared, and in my view relies on the language-specific disclosure of the impersonal.

Several differences separate the constructions in (36), but they do not affect this basic conclusion. One is that clitic doubling is possible for the Dative in Spanish and Bulgarian, but does not exist in Polish, which fails to affect the semantics. Another difference is the position of the reflexive within the clitic cluster; Spanish places it first, which is not the case in Bulgarian or Polish (see (31b)). Again this has no effect on the shared meaning. Finally, each language places clitics differently in the clause. Bulgarian is a Tobler-Mussafia language, which the other two are not, but this has no effect on the different uses of the reflexive clitic.

Bulgarian, Polish, and Spanish share constructions with psychological Vs, Datives as Experiencers, and reflexives. One example is Sp. A Juan se le olvidaron los libros “John forgot the books.”. This type of Dative Experiencer bears a resemblance to so-called Quirky Subjects. However, the strategy in (32-33) is again different, and one telling contrast is that when the Dative combines with the impersonal, it inherits the Thematic role that would be assigned to się if unaccompanied (Agent, or Theme). Thus, the number of Thematic roles and their nature are both preserved, which is also the case when indefinites are disclosed by adverbs of quantification. I see this aspect as one consequence of disclosure in the case of (32-33).

In sum, the strategy that combines an unselected Dative with the impersonal in Polish does not reduce to more familiar effects with Datives of
Interest or Quirky-like subjects, which Polish shares with Spanish. The unselected Dative that in Polish combines with the impersonal clitic seems to borrow the formal role of that clitic, but not its "referential" character, and I propose to view it as a discloser in the way that follows.

a) In the general case, disclosers for the impersonal in Romance and Slavic are the adverbs of quantification. They provide varying quantificational force, as discussed in 2.2. and illustrated in (22-24), but do not affect the impersonal in other ways, and Theta-roles are preserved.

b) In Polish, non-selected Datives may also function as disclosers. They wipe out the intrinsic existential force of the impersonal and come to bind it, as in (31b) and (32b), without affecting Theta-roles. In this strategy, the Dative is comparable to a Left Dislocated phrase, and the reflexive is like a resumptive clitic, but is indefinite. We could thus call the Polish construction in (31-33) the Impersonal Clitic Left Dislocation.

c) The interpretable content of the impersonal amounts to a \{human/sentient\} feature, and this is also preserved under disclosure. The Dative must match this feature in order to disclose the impersonal, which excludes inanimates from the construction.

For Chierchia, the human feature in the impersonal functions as a semantic index. Thus, it can be assumed that the discloser operator on the Dative is the human feature treated as an index as well, when it matches the index of impersonal się. A Dative that is missing this index, i.e. is inanimate, lacks the disclosure operator so cannot affect the impersonal.

On this view, the semantics of Polish Dative disclosure for (32b) *Jankowi pracuje się dobrze.* “John works well.” is as in (37), which I owe to Gennaro Chierchia:

   b. się (work) =  3x[hum] [work(x[hum])].
   c. John.DAT [hum] work.3S się [hum]
     3 DIS x[hum] 3x[hum] [work(x[hum])] (John).
   d. lx[hum] [work(x[hum])] (John).
   e. work (John).

(37b) represents the semantics of the “bare” impersonal in Italian, Polish, or Spanish. The semantic feature that is represented as an index is notated [hum]. (37c) is for Polish: the human variable is disclosed via the discloser operator [hum] in the Dative, and the result is predicated of John. By the semantics of disclosure, (37c) is equivalent to line (37d). (37e) is the
simplified version of (37d) after lambda conversion. Thus, the effect of the disclosure procedure is to eliminate the impersonal from the structure, while retaining other aspects.

The proposed disclosure analysis makes a variety of (correct) predictions that I cannot explore for lack of space, but I will mention two in closing. The first one is that a *John.DAT + się* type expression will now be able to antecede ordinary pronouns including little *pro*, but not another bare impersonal, which will have its own existential force. This is a correct prediction. The second prediction suggested to me by Chierchia is that there should be quantificational variability when the discloser is an indefinite. That is, a construction of type (A) *linguist.DAT seldom się works well* should be equivalent to *Few linguists work well*, and other adverbs of quantification should contribute different forces. As far as I can see, this also seems correct.


Impersonal *se/si/się* is a syntactic Simplex Expression anaphor: a null expression whose defective interpretable content amounts to a human feature, and which raises to the clitic to repair formal and referential deficiencies. It repairs its formal deficiency by checking Case, and its referential deficiency by acquiring quantificational force (i.e. in R&R’s terms, it forms a Case-marked chain, and goes from −Ref to +Ref), while remaining without PHI-features. It can function as syntactic controller, syntactic binder of all types of anaphors, including the long distance type, and reciprocals. It can be an external/internal argument of many predicates, including those associated with individual variables. The impersonal is a non-reflexivizer, so similar to a regular pronoun it can be free. Semantically, the impersonal is a human indefinite pronoun with existential force. As a pronoun, it can escape the Novelty Condition and antecede itself, which is not possible for indefinite NPs. The impersonal is existential but displays (optional) quantificational variability when adverbs of quantification disclose it and bind it. Thus the impersonal can be equivalent to *some* and *all*, as many in the past have noted, but also to *many* and *few*, which is less known. Polish offers a semantic parametric choice that affects the clitic as functional category, and is absent from Romance (and other Slavic languages). In Polish not only adverbs of quantification but also unselected {human/sentient} Datives may disclose indefinite *się*, which thus functions as an expletive pronoun that transmits properties to its discloser. On this view, the differences between the Romance and Polish impersonal arises from parametric variation in semantics. They derive from a choice of discloser for the impersonal as indefinite. They reside
in the reflexive clitic as functional category, which is the type of item also considered the locus of syntactic variation.

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