

PRAGMATICS OF IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS IN TURKISH

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# PRAGMATICS OF IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS IN TURKISH

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Pragmatics of Impersonal Pronouns in Turkish

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Seyyit Talha Bedir, certify that

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## ABSTRACT

### Pragmatics of Impersonal Pronouns in Turkish

Impersonal pronouns are pronouns without specific, identifiable real-world referents. It is established in the literature that they are used to convey generalizable claims while expressing a certain degree of subjectivity at the same time. Relatively few works, however, study how the use of impersonal pronouns relates to the flow of the discourse and the identity of the speakers. This thesis aims to investigate how Turkish utilizes its six impersonal pronouns interactionally, which are *sen/siz* ‘you’, *onlar* ‘they’, *biz* ‘we’, *insan* ‘human’, *adam* ‘man’. In order to achieve this goal, 11 hours of recorded data is analyzed in terms of stance-taking, positioning and narrative analysis. The first finding is that impersonal pronouns, with the exception of impersonal-*biz*, are used to take predictable affective stances—the pronouns *sen* and *insan* are used to take positive stances; *adam* and *onlar* negative. Secondly, impersonal pronouns are found to position the speakers in numerous ways including being more knowledgeable, morally superior, and disadvantaged. Because of their stance-taking and positioning properties, Turkish impersonal pronouns are frequently encountered in the orientation and evaluation parts of the narratives. Additionally, if there is an antagonist-protagonist dichotomy in the narrative, speakers utilize Turkish impersonal pronouns in order to position themselves on the side of the protagonist and away from the antagonist. Consequently, in this research, it is shown for Turkish that impersonal pronouns not only put forward generalizable claims but also deliver what the speakers like and dislike and where they position themselves in terms of knowledge and morality.

## ÖZET

### Türkçedeki Kişisiz Adılların Edimbilimi

Kişisiz adılar gerek d nyada spesifik, tanımlanabilir bir g nderimi bulunmayan adıllardır. Alanyazında halihazırda saptandığı  zere kişisiz adılar genellenebilir savlar iletirken aynı zamanda belirli bir derece  znellik de ifade ederler. Ancak g rece daha az sayıda alıřma kişisiz adılların nasıl s ylemin akışıyla ve konuşucuların kimliğiyle bağlantılı olduğunu arařtırmıştır. Bu tez T rkenin beř kişisiz adılını -yani, ‘sen/siz’, ‘onlar’, ‘biz’, ‘insan’ ve ‘adam’ı- nasıl etkileřimsel olarak kullandığını arařtırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu hedefe eriřmek iin 11 saatlik kaydedilmiş veri duruř-alma, konumlandırma ve anlatı analizi erevesinde  z mlenmektedir. İlk bulgu kişisiz-biz dıřındaki diğerk kişisiz adılların  ng rlebilir duyuřsal duruřlar almak iin kullanıldığdır—‘sen’ ve ‘insan’ adıları olumlu duruřlar almak iin kullanılırken ‘adam’ ve ‘onlar’ olumsuzlar iin kullanılmaktadırlar. İkinci olarak, kişisiz adılların konuşucuları eřitli řekillerde ‘daha bilgili’, ‘ahlaken  st n’, ‘dezavantajlı’ gibi řekillerde konumlandığı tespit edilmiştir. T rke kişisiz adılar, duruř-alma ve konumlandırma  zelliklerinden dolayı anlatıların oryantasyon ve değerkendirme kısımlarında sıka bulunurlar. Buna ek olarak, eğerk anlatıda ana karakter-karřıt karakter ikiliğı bulunuyorsa, konuşucular T rke kişisiz adıları kendilerini ana karakterden yana ve karřıt karaktere zıt olacak řekilde kullanılmaktadırlar. Sonu olarak, bu alıřmada T rke iin g sterilmektedir ki kişisiz adılar sadece genellenebilir ifadeleri  ne s rmemekte, ayrıca konuşucuların sevdiği, sevmediğı řeyleri ve kendilerini bilgi ve ahlak aısından nasıl konumlandığını da iletmektedir.

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*This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful family  
and Samwise the Brave*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Turkish personal pronouns .....	4
1.2 Turkish as a pro-drop language .....	8
1.3 Impersonal use of personal pronouns in Turkish .....	11
1.4 Literature survey .....	13
1.5 Terminology .....	33
1.6 Aim of the thesis .....	36
CHAPTER 2: DATA .....	38
2.1 Construction of the data set .....	38
2.2 Data .....	39
2.3 Transcription .....	41
2.4 Tokens .....	42
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	45
3.1 Stance .....	45
3.2 Positioning .....	47
3.3 Narrative analysis .....	48
CHAPTER 4: TURKISH IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS .....	52
4.1 Impersonal- <i>sen</i> .....	53
4.2 Impersonal- <i>onlar</i> .....	56

4.3 Impersonal- <i>biz</i> .....	57
4.4 Impersonal- <i>insan</i> .....	58
4.5 Impersonal- <i>adam</i> .....	59
4.6 Conclusion .....	60
CHAPTER 5: STANCE AND POSITIONING BY IMPERSONALS .....	62
5.1 Introduction .....	62
5.2 Impersonal- <i>sen</i> .....	63
5.3 Impersonal- <i>onlar</i> .....	69
5.4 Impersonal- <i>biz</i> .....	75
5.5 Impersonal- <i>insan</i> .....	76
5.6 Impersonal- <i>adam</i> .....	78
5.7 Conclusion .....	82
CHAPTER 6: IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS IN NARRATIVES.....	85
6.1 Impersonal pronouns and narrative analysis .....	85
6.2 Conclusion .....	108
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION.....	110
7.1 Findings.....	111
7.2 Limitations and further research .....	116
APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM .....	118
REFERENCES.....	120

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Turkish Pronominal Paradigm .....	5
Table 2. Summary of Impersonal Usages of Second Persons as Discussed in Laberge and Sankoff (1979), Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990), and O'Connor (1994) .....	24
Table 3. The Details of the Recordings.....	40
Table 4. Number of Tokens in Each Recording.....	44
Table 5. Number of Tokens in Different Types of Impersonal <i>sen</i> 'you'.....	53
Table 6. The Summary of Stance-taking Properties of Turkish Impersonal Pronouns.....	113
Table 7. Summary of Roles of Turkish Impersonal Pronouns in Narratives .....	116

## ABBREVIATIONS

1SG	First person singular
1PL	First person plural
2SG	Second-person singular
2PL	Second-person plural
3SG	Third-person singular
3PL	Third-person plural
ABIL	Ability modality marker
ABL	Ablative
ACC	Accusative
AOR	Aorist
CND	Conditional
DAT	Dative
FUT	Future
GEN	Genitive
INF	Infinitive marker
LOC	Locative
NEG	Negation
NMLZR	Nominalizer
NOM	Nominative
OPT	Optative
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PROG	Progressive

PRTCP

Participle

PST

Past



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates impersonal pronouns in Turkish regarding their discursive and pragmatic aspects. The term *impersonal pronoun* is an umbrella term for the pronouns that lack specific real-world referents. By lacking specific referents, impersonal pronouns are used to deliver claims that are more generalizable than personal pronouns are. This thesis claims that, at least for Turkish, impersonal pronouns also offer predictable information about the speaker's feelings on a particular subject matter and make generalizable claims by taking a stance and *positioning* discourse participants.

Various classifications of impersonal pronouns will be discussed throughout this chapter. For now, one rather obvious distinction of impersonals can be made as such that there are impersonal pronouns whose primary use is impersonal, such as 'one' in English as in (1a-b), and personal pronouns that were used impersonally as in (1c-e).

- (1) a. One does not simply walk into Mordor.

(Jackson, 2001)

- b. Wenn man als Mannschaft gewinnen will,  
if one as team win want  
muss man kaempfen.  
must one fight

'If a team wants to win, it has to fight.'

(Zobel, 2014, p. 22)

- c. On n'est jamais si bien servi que par soi.

one is.not never so good served than by oneself

‘One can never be better served than by oneself.’

(Legendre, 1990, p. 109)

d. Om de litar på dig, får du inte göra

if they rely on you must you not make

dem besvikna.

them disappointed

‘If they rely on you, you mustn’t make them disappointed.’

(Egerland, 2003, p. 91)

e. You/They get a lot of snow in the Faeroe Islands.

(Whitley, 1978, p. 23)

English *one* in (1a), German *man* in (1b), and French *on* in (1c) are used in an impersonal<sup>1</sup> fashion, which is their main form of use. In sentences (1d) and (1e), however, referential personal pronouns (i.e., pronouns that are typically used to refer to an actual referent in the real world) are used in a way that they do not refer to any individual or any group of individuals.

Siewierska (2004) holds that impersonal pronouns “refer not to a specific individual or group of individuals but to people in general or a loosely specified collective.” There are two essential aspects to emphasize in this definition. Firstly, (i) a decrease or total absence of specificity is observable in all of the examples in (1). In (1a), for example, Boromir does not talk about any specific individual, but he talks about people in general. Likewise, in (1d), the speaker does not refer to the addressee when she says *you*, or to a group of people when she says *they*, but rather loosely

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<sup>1</sup> Impersonal use are not the only use of these pronouns—for example, when it is elicitable from the context French *on* can be used to refer any person (Laberge & Sankoff, 1979) and German *man* can be used for first person plural (Zobel, 2014).



refers to Faeroe Islanders or people who visit there. The second aspect of this definition is that (ii) impersonal pronouns are used to refer to *people*. That is, an impersonal pronoun cannot refer to an unspecified animal<sup>2</sup> which caused the oddness in (2).

(2)       #One is not treated well in the zoos of this city.

The use of impersonal pronouns is widespread among languages (see Laberge & Sankoff (1979) for French, Whitley (1978) for English, Gruber (2011) for Dutch, Egerland (2003) for Swedish, Alonso-Ovalle (2000) for Spanish, Zobel (2014) for German among others). Siewierska (2004) reports an extensive set of languages that have a form of impersonal pronoun—these include but are not limited to Romance, Udmurt, Hausa, Somali, Greek, Kashmiri, Hungarian, Tamil, Koromfe, Mundani, Nkore-Kiga, Kurdish, Tukang Besi and so forth. Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) make an interesting overarching claim that every language with a closed pronoun set like Chinese, English, Modern Hebrew, Hindi, and Persian potentially has an impersonal second person. Languages like Japanese and Korean, where the pronoun set is not clearly defined, do not.

Turkish, like the languages above, contains impersonal pronouns and has a wide variety of usage, which will be the primary concern of this thesis. However, firstly it would be beneficial to provide some typological information regarding the Turkish pronominal paradigm and pro-drop feature of Turkish. Hence, this chapter firstly introduces the Turkish personal pronominal system in section 1.1. Section 1.2 will be about the pro-drop feature of Turkish syntax, which is valid for both personal and impersonal pronouns. Section 1.3 will exhibit how Turkish utilizes its regular personal pronouns in an impersonal sense. Section 1.4 will provide a lengthy

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<sup>2</sup> Zobel (2014) reports that according to some speakers, German *man* can be used to refer animate objects in general, rather than only humans.

literature review that discusses how impersonal pronouns are examined in terms of their types, their relationship with personal equivalents, and their function in discourse. Next up, section 1.5 will show the terminology that will be adopted throughout this thesis. Finally, section 1.6 will list the aims of this thesis.

### 1.1 Turkish personal pronouns

Turkish can utilize personal pronouns with real referents in an impersonal way just like the languages exemplified in the example (1). Therefore, I will briefly explain Turkish pronominal system in this section.

Göksel and Kerslake (2005) define pronouns as “expressions that are used when referring to persons, things or states of affairs that have previously been mentioned, whose referents are obvious from the context or whose content is only partially specified.” This definition encompasses all pronouns that have a referent in the world which contrasts them with impersonal pronouns. In this thesis, these kinds of pronouns will be called *personal* pronouns. According to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), Turkish personal pronouns comprise simple personal pronouns, the reflexive pronoun *kendi* ‘self,’ and reciprocal pronoun *birbir* ‘each other’.

There are six simple personal pronouns in Turkish: *ben* ‘I’, *sen* ‘you’, *o* ‘he/she’, *biz* ‘we’, *siz* ‘you (plural)’, and *onlar* ‘they’. Turkish personal pronouns are differentiated in their number and person features. Turkish does not differentiate personal pronouns in terms of gender (unlike French, Russian, Arabic, and so forth) or other features such as clusivity (unlike Hawaiian, Tok Pisin, and so on).<sup>3</sup> As Moravcsik (2012) states, some pronominal systems also make distinctions based on

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<sup>3</sup> The differences based on gender, clusivity and kinship will not be covered in this thesis as Turkish lacks these two differentiation criteria in its pronominal paradigm.

social factors, which give information about the relationship between the speaker and addressee. A famous example is the French *tu/vous* or German *du/Sie* distinction in the second person. French *tu* and German *du* are preferred in sincere and informal contexts, whereas *vous* and *Sie* are preferred in formal contexts. The same differentiation exists in Turkish second-person pronouns. Turkish second-person plural can be used both when there are plural addressees and when there is a single address in a formal setting. Formal second-person can also be used when the addressee is hierarchically above or meeting for the first time. Thus, if we take all of the three differentiating features (number, person and formality) into consideration, we can summarize the Turkish pronominal paradigm as in Table 1.

Table 1. Turkish Pronominal Paradigm

	1	2 (informal)	2 (formal)	3
singular	ben	sen	siz	o
plural	biz	siz	siz	onlar

Personal usages of Turkish simple personal pronouns are illustrated in example (3).

(3) a. *ben* ‘I’

Ben buraya sen-in için gel-me-di-m.

I here.DAT you-GEN for come-NEG-PST-1SG

‘I did not come here for you.’

b. *sen* ‘you (singular)’

Sen bunu nere-den öğren-di-n?

you this.ACC where-ABL learn-PST-2SG

‘Where did you learn this?’

c. *o* ‘he/she

O biz-den biri değil.

He/she we-ABL one not

‘He is not one of us.’

d. *biz* ‘we’

Biz bu gece sinema-ya git-me-yi düşün-üyor-uz.

we this night theatre-DAT go-INF-ACC think-PROG-1PL

‘We are planning to go to the movie theatre tonight.’

e. *siz* ‘you (plural)’

Siz ailecek bu problem-den sorumlu-sunuz.

you(pl) as.family this problem-ABL responsible-2PL

‘You are responsible for this problem as a family.’

f. *onlar* ‘they’

Onlar ilk hamle-yi yap-acak-(lar).

they first move-ACC make-FUT-(3PL)

‘They will make the first move.’

I have already indicated that the second-person plural pronoun *siz* can be used to mark formality as well. In this usage, *siz* can be used to refer to singular or plural persons. In (4), for example, *siz* is used formally to refer to a single person.

- (4) Siz bu konu-da ne de-r-siniz, Ali Bey?  
you this matter-LOC what say-AOR-2PL Ali mister  
‘What do you say on this matter, Mr Ali?’

*Kendi* ‘self’ is a reflexive pronoun that, according to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), has four different pronominal uses. Each use is exemplified below.

*Kendi* can be used emphatically. This *kendi* modifies an NP that is marked with possessive and means ‘own’ as observed in (5).

- (5) Bu yemeğ-i ben kendim yap-tı-m.  
 this meal-ACC I myself do-PST-1SG  
 ‘I made this food myself.’

The second type of use of this pronoun is reflexive. This *kendi* is used as an object NP or part of an object NP to indicate that subject is also the recipient of the action as seen in (6).

- (6) Bugün kendi-m-e ayakkabı al-acağ-ım.  
 today myself-1SG.POSS-DAT shoe buy-FUT-1SG  
 ‘Today, I will buy myself a car.’

*Kendi*’s 3<sup>rd</sup> person inflected form *kendisi* can sometimes be directly used instead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun *o*. According to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), they are interchangeable, but *kendisi* is slightly more formal than *o*, as exemplified in (7).

- (7) Ahmet hala uyu-yor. Kendisi/o bu  
 Ahmet still sleep-PROG.3SG himself/he this  
 gün-ler-de çok yorgun.  
 day-PL-DAT very tired  
 ‘Ahmet is still asleep. He’s very tired at the moment.’  
 (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005, p. 237)

*Kendi* might be used as a resumptive pronoun to refer to the head of the relative clause within relative clauses formed via *-DIK* and *-(y)AcAK*.. The relative clause in (8) is in brackets.

- (8) [Kendi-lerin-i defalarca ara-dığ-ımız]  
 he/she-3PL.POSS-ACC many\_times call-NMLZR-1PL

yetkili-ler      telefon-lar-ımız-a      cevap  
 staff-PL      phone-PL-1PL.POSS-DAT      answer  
 ver-me-di-ler.

give-NEG-PST-PL

‘The persons in charge, whom we have rung many times, have not responded to our calls.’

(Göksel & Kerslake, 2005, p. 237)

Another personal pronoun in Turkish is the reciprocal pronoun *birbir* ‘each other’ as exemplified in (9).

- (9)      Onlar   birbir-lerin-e      karşı   saygılı      değil-ler.  
          they   each\_other-3PL.POSS-DAT   toward respectful   not-3PL  
          ‘They are not respectful towards each other.’

In this section, I have briefly summarized the common use of Turkish personal pronouns. The first type is six standard personal pronouns: *ben* ‘I’, *sen* ‘you’, *o* ‘he/she’, *biz* ‘we’, *siz* ‘you (plural)’, and *onlar* ‘they’. I have also demonstrated the uses of reflexive *kendi* and reciprocal *birbir*.

## 1.2 Turkish as a pro-drop language

Before laying out the basics of impersonal use of these pronouns, however, I will touch upon the pro-drop aspect of Turkish grammar as Turkish impersonal pronouns can be both be found overtly or covertly. Turkish is a pro-drop language (Özsoy, 1987), which allows a null pro to sit in the subject position. Person and number features of the null subject are accessible through agreement on the predicate. Example (10) demonstrates both cases.

- (10) a. Ben anla-dı-m.  
 I understand-PST-1SG  
 ‘I understood.’
- b. pro anla-dı-m.  
 pro understand-PST-1SG  
 ‘I understood.’

In (10a) *ben* ‘I’ is overt. However, it can be omitted (i.e., replaced with a null *pro*) as in (10b). In (10b), the subject is still accessible through the agreement suffix *-(I)m*. Replacing with a null *pro* applies not only to the first person singular but also to all six Turkish pronouns listed in (3). Analyzing the subject in (10b) as merely optional, however, is a risky proposition—Öztürk (2001), disagreeing with the optionality, reveals the discourse-dependent nature of the overt-covert selection. Building on Enç (1986) and Erguvanlı-Taylan (1986), Öztürk (2001) proposes that the presence and absence of overt pronouns are, in fact, pragmatically conditioned, as exemplified in (11) and (12).

- (11) a. Ben gel-di-m. Ama sen/\*pro gel-me-di-n  
 I come-PST-1SG but you come-NEG-PST-2SG  
 ‘I came. But you didn’t come.’
- b. Speaker: Bu soru-yu kim sor-du?  
 this question-ACC who ask-PST.3SG  
 Hearer: Ben/\*pro sor-du-m.  
 I ask-PST-1SG  
 ‘I asked.’
- (Öztürk, 2001, p. 240)

The contrastive subject in (11a) and the topic subject in (11b) are obligatory.

However, without any contrastive context, subjects in the second sentence of (11a) and the hearer's sentence in (11b) would be optional. In (12), the repeated subject in coordinated clauses is judged odd since the topic, i.e., the first-person pronoun, is already established via overt use in the initial clause.

- (12) Ben<sub>i</sub> ev-e gel-di-m, pro<sub>i</sub>/\*ben kitap  
 I house-DAT come-PST-1SG book  
 oku-du-m, pro<sub>i</sub>/\*ben televizyon seyret-ti-m.  
 read-PST-1sg TV watch-PST-1SG  
 'I came home, I did some reading, I watched TV.'  
 (Öztürk, 2001, p. 241)

These examples illustrate that the optionality argument for Turkish pronominal subjects does not necessarily hold. The discourse has a significant role in determining the presence or absence of the personal pronoun.

The presence or absence of the overt pronoun in the subject position also significantly affects the impersonal readings. According to Siewierska (2004), in pro-drop languages, the impersonal uses of the first-, second-, or third-person forms sanction the overt pronoun to be dropped. This is at least her observation of Rumanian, Italian, Sardinian, Iberian Spanish, Greek, Tarifit Berber, as well as the Slavic languages and the Finno-Ugric languages. However, she also observes that overt person form with impersonal reading is regularly used in Latin American Spanish. Turkish, as shown in section 1.3, can use its pronouns impersonally both overtly and covertly.

In this section, it is established that Turkish is a pro-drop language, or at least it has the ability to drop the *pro*. The next section introduces the impersonal use of



personal pronouns in Turkish and demonstrates that the presence-absence criterion of Turkish impersonal pronouns is identical to that of personal pronouns.

### 1.3 Impersonal use of personal pronouns in Turkish

In this section, firstly, impersonal usage of Turkish impersonal pronouns will be examined. Secondly, the discourse-dependent overt-covert selection criteria used in personal pronouns is applied to impersonal pronouns.

In Turkish, first-person plural *biz*, the second-person forms *sen* and *siz*, and third-person plural *onlar* can be used impersonally. Impersonal usage of these pronouns is illustrated in example (13).

(13) a. *biz* ‘we’:

pro Kural-lar-a uy-a-lım, pro  
 rule-PL-DAT comply-OPT-1PL  
 uy-ma-yan-lar-ı uyar-a-lım.  
 comply-NEG- PRTCP-PL-ACC warn-OPT-1PL  
 ‘Let us obey the rules and warn the ones who don’t.’

b. *sen* ‘you (singular, informal)’:

Terapist-lik harika bir kariyer, pro  
 therapist-ness great a career  
 insan-lar-ın en derin problem-ler-in-i  
 person-PL-GEN most deep problem-PL-GEN-ACC  
 çöz-üyor-sun.  
 solve-PROG-2SG  
 ‘Being a therapist is a great career; you solve people’s deepest problems.’

c. *siz* ‘you (singular, formal)’:

*pro* Cami için ilk ışık-lar-dan sağ-a  
mosque for first light-PL-ABL right-DAT  
dön-üyor-sunuz.  
turn-PROG-2PL

‘To go to the mosque, you take a right turn from the first lights.’

d. *onlar* ‘they’:

*pro* Ödev-in-i bitir-mez-se-n  
homework-2SG.POSS-ACC finish-NEG.AOR-CND-2SG  
sana tembel de-r-ler.  
you.DAT lazy say-AOR-3PL

‘If you do not finish your homework, they’ll call you lazy.’

In (13a), the reference of the pronoun *biz* is neither definite nor specific. The verb is inflected via optative mood, which is widely used with impersonal *biz* to convey general rules that everybody is supposed to follow. In (10b), the *sen* is used to refer not to the addressee but to an unspecified person who is a therapist. The sentence is formulated in a way to describe a general property of a particular kind of people, therapists. (10c) is slightly different in that it does not convey truth but how a person would react in a specific situation. In the literature, this usage is aptly called a situational insertion (Laberge & Sankoff, 1979; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990) which will be detailed in section 0 below. Finally, (13d) gives information about how people, in general, would react to a particular situation, the situation in which the addressee does not finish their meal.

All of the sentences in (13) contain covert impersonal pronouns. However, they can also be used overtly in Turkish, if speaker deems necessary. The criteria for

the overtness or covertness of the pronoun are identical to those of personal pronouns put forth in Öztürk's (2001) work. For instance, in (13a), replacing *pro* with overt *biz* 'we' results in an odd sentence as in (14a). However, if there is a contrastive context, as in (14b), overt usage is not only possible but obligatory. In (14b), the impersonal first-person plural must also be stressed to indicate contrast.

- (14) a. \*Biz kurallara uyalım uymayanları uyaralım.

Intended: 'Let's obey the rules and warn the ones who don't.'

- b. Onların kurallara uymaması önemli değil, \*(BİZ) kurallara uyalım uymayanları uyaralım.

'That they disregard the rules is not important; let US obey the rules and warn the ones who don't.'

In conclusion, it is possible to have impersonal pronouns both overtly and covertly. Similar to the process in their personal equivalents, impersonal pronouns are omitted if there is no reason to have them, such as showing contrast or introducing the topic.

#### 1.4 Literature survey

Pronouns that do not have specific referents are called various terms, including universal non-specific, generic, generalized human, generalized indefinite, referential arbitrary, and impersonal (Siewierska, 2004). In this thesis, the term "impersonal pronouns" will be used.

Not only the terminology but also the definitions of impersonal pronouns are diverse in the literature. So far, it is only shown that impersonal pronouns are less specific than personal pronouns. However, although this is valid for any impersonal pronoun in any language, this definition is too vague to be useful. Therefore, in what

follows, I will briefly report the works that suggested definitions for impersonal pronouns.

#### 1.4.1 Definitions of impersonal pronouns

Earliest accounts contrast these pronouns that lack actual referents with the ones that do (e.g., Whitley, 1978; Bolinger, 1979). Since personal pronouns have specific referents that are obvious from the context, they are more easily definable. Once personal pronouns are defined, the ones that remain outside the definition will be easier to identify. Personal pronouns can be defined as in (15).

- (15)
- First-person singular: The speaker
  - Second-person singular: The addressee
  - Third-person singular: A singular referent that is not the speaker or the addressee
  - First-person plural<sup>4</sup>: The speaker and some other people
  - Second-person plural: The addressee and some other people
  - Third-person plural: More than one referent that does not include the speaker or the addressee

Naturally, any impersonal pronoun is outside of these definitions. Impersonal ‘you’ does not refer to the addressee or impersonal ‘they’ does not refer to a group of referents other than the speaker or addressee—they refer to the people generally or to a loosely defined group. Pronouns whose main use is impersonal, like English *one* and French *on* are not included either.

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<sup>4</sup> Cysouw (2003) renames the plurals of first- and second- person marking as “groups” rather than plurals because of the fact that first- and second- person plural are not actually comprised of more than one first- and second- persons respectively.

Of course, merely contrasting impersonal pronouns with personal ones is not enough as it gives no information about the content of the impersonal pronouns. There are many features of the impersonals listed in the literature as defining properties. One of them is, unsurprisingly, generality<sup>5</sup> (Laberge & Sankoff, 1979; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990; Predelli, 2004; Stirling & Manderson, 2011, among others). In other words, impersonal pronouns are used to make generic claims such as truisms or everyday situations that apply to any person.

If these pronouns build statements that are applicable to anybody, then it follows that these impersonal pronouns can also be replaced by an indefinite pronoun such as English *one*, German *man* or French *on*. This replaceability is observed by many linguists, albeit they also noted the different registers of each use. Laberge and Sankoff (1979), for example, observed that although *on* can replace an impersonal *tu* ‘you (singular)’ or *vous* ‘you (plural/formal)’, it is a little more formal and generally preferred by elderly people. Huddleston (1984) states that the “generic” *you* is “a stylistically less formal variant of non-deictic *one*” (as cited from Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 740). This difference in formality is observable in the example (16).

- (16)      a. When you read books, your vocabulary improves immensely.  
            b. When one reads books, one’s vocabulary improves immensely.

While the sentence with the impersonal ‘you’ is probably something you can tell your friend like a piece of advice, uttering the latter would be somewhat odd in a friendly, informal context.

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<sup>5</sup> In some of the papers (Stirling & Manderson, 2011) the term *genericity* is also used. I find the terms generality and genericity completely interchangeable and opt to use the former one throughout this thesis.

Another difference is reported by Bolinger (1979), who states that “there appears to be an invitation to the imagination in *you* that is absent in *one*.” For example, the sentence in (17) sounds odd if ‘one’ replaces the impersonal ‘you’.

- (17)      a. You try to tell him something, he hauls off and hits you.  
            b. \*One tries to tell him something, he hauls off and hits one.

(Bolinger, 1979, p. 202)

By saying “you try to tell him something,” the speaker wants to invite the addressee to imagine a situation in which they try to speak to that person (him).

Given that replacing the impersonal second-person pronoun with an always-impersonal pronoun like impersonal ‘one’ is not necessarily possible in every context, it is important to examine whether it is possible to replace impersonally used personal pronouns with each other—replacing impersonal ‘they’ with an impersonal ‘you’, for example. Whitley (1978) reports in some generic contexts, replacement is possible, but there is a difference in the *psychological distance*, as he puts it. For instance, impersonal pronoun change affects the pragmatics of the sentence (18).

- (18)      We/You/They don’t eat much oatmeal where Ricardo comes from.

(Whitley, 1978, p. 34)

Differing the impersonal pronouns from ‘we’ to ‘you’ and ‘they’ does not change the sentence's truth conditions. The sentence is valid for all impersonal pronouns, but the register change is observable. Impersonal first-person plural indicates the speaker's psychological involvement much more than others, whereas impersonal ‘they’ feels comparatively more distant to the speaker. The bottom line is that replacement is possible in this context.

To summarize, impersonal pronouns are claimed to differ from personal ones in terms of their reference properties. In addition to this contrast, two basic properties

are commonly observed: Firstly, they are chiefly used to deliver a sense of generality—statements that the speaker believes apply to a vast and vague proportion of individuals. Secondly, they can generally be replaced by another impersonal pronoun. However, there are caveats to the replaceability criterion. Although replacing the impersonal pronoun with another is definitely possible in many generic contexts, there is a visible difference in the register. In some contexts like (17b), it seems odd to replace.

Nevertheless, even the most reported feature of impersonal pronouns, i.e., generality, is susceptible to counterexamples. Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) provide the example in (19), which is slightly different from what we have seen thus far.

- (19) You are/\*One is in Egypt admiring the pyramids and feeling that you have really left your own world and time behind when suddenly you meet your next door neighbor from home.

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 749, “\*One is” added to show the contrast)

The impersonal ‘you’ in (19) not only fails to be replaced by ‘one’ but also is not used to report a generic situation at all. Instead, it is used to invite the addressee to imagine a circumstance in which the addressee is pictured in the middle. Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) name this type *life drama*.

As one may observe, it is challenging to place all possible impersonals under one definition since their uses vary significantly. They can both be used to share information and construct scenes for narratives. Therefore, understanding the different types of impersonal pronouns is vital besides seeking an all-encompassing definition. Hence, in the following section, I will examine different types of impersonal pronouns identified in the literature and the various criteria to differentiate them.

### 1.4.2 Types of impersonal pronouns

As discussed above, one of the earliest discoveries about impersonal pronouns is that they are not generally used to talk about one-off, specific events whose time and place are definite (e.g., Whitley, 1978; Bolinger, 1979). However, we have also seen that different types of impersonal pronouns are subject to different constraints (such as replaceability with ‘one’) and are used to achieve different goals. Among these goals, we have given examples of expressing truisms, general facts about the world, or imagining a situation. For instance, Laberge and Sankoff (1979) conducted a corpus study on French impersonal pronouns. They put forward two pragmatic categories for impersonal *tu/vous* ‘you (sing)/you (pl or formal)’ and impersonal *on* ‘one’: *situational insertion* and *formulation of morals or truisms*.

In situational insertion, the speaker either “assimilates himself to a much wider class of people” (Laberge & Sankoff, 1979, p. 429) or talks about a situation that might happen to anyone. In this type of use, although the speakers talk about a situation they are a part of, they use an impersonal pronoun rather than the first person pronoun, as seen in (20). All second person pronouns below are impersonal.

- (20) *J’aime mieux boire une bonne brosse, c’est mieux que fumer de la drogue, je trouve. Le lendemain matin tu as u gros mal de tête mais ça fait rien, tu es tout là, tandis qu’avec la drogue tu sais pas si tu vas êtrelà le lendemain. Tu peux te prendre pour Batman ou Superman puis tu te pitches dans les poubelles.*  
‘I prefer to drink myself stoned, it’s better than smoking dope, I feel. The next morning you have a bad headache but that’s no big deal, you are all in one piece, whereas with drugs you don’t know if you will be there the next day. You might decide you’re Batman or Superman and take off into a garbage can.’

(Laberge & Sankoff, 1979, p. 428)

In (20), while using the impersonal ‘you’, the speaker talks about their own experience. Speaker uses impersonal second-person pronouns rather than ‘I’ to signal



that this is a generic situation rather than something uniquely applied to them.

Laberge and Sankoff analyze this usage as “downgrading [speaker’s] own experience to incidental status in the discourse.” In all situational insertion examples, *on* ‘one’ can replace the impersonal second-person with only a slight increase in formality.

The other category, formulation of morals and truisms, conveys typical knowledge that encompasses more general situations than situational insertion. In this usage, speakers share what they think is a widely known fact, wisdom or rule. (21) below illustrates several examples that can be placed under this category. In this type, both impersonal second-person pronouns and mainly impersonal pronouns like ‘one’ are applicable (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990; Laberge & Sankoff, 1979).

- (21)
- a. Your/one’s true friends are the ones that support you/one in the darkest times.
  - b. At night, you/one can listen to music only wearing a headset.
  - c. As parents, you/one never want(s) the kids to see your/one’s debates turning into a shouting match.

O’Connor (1994) uses different terminology for similar impersonal usages. In her research, she examines how prisoners use the pronouns to narrate their traumatic experience and detects three types of impersonal ‘you’s: *self-indexing* ‘you’ in which prisoners talk about themselves, *generic* ‘you’ where they pose a general moral reflection and *involving* ‘you’ in which they convey an untypical situation to demand empathy from the addressee. The first category, self-indexing ‘you’ indexes the speaker—more or less corresponding to the situational insertion type we defined above. On the other hand, the generic ‘you’ is used to claim more generic facts about the world that apply to anybody—being the most impersonal use of all categorizations. These two types are typically categorized under a broader category called *structural knowledge descriptions*, i.e., descriptions of general statements,

situations that are not limited to one-time, narrowly defined (in terms of place and time) events (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, following Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger, 1982). There is also a novel impersonal type in O'Connor's (1994) work involving 'you', which will be touched upon at the end of this section.

The impersonal pronouns that involved structural knowledge descriptions exhibit a very flexible amount of replaceability with other impersonal pronouns. However, as illustrated in (19), not all impersonal usages conform to these guidelines. Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) dub this type as 'life drama' and notice a few differences that could be summarized as (i) absence of generic statements, (ii) lack of replaceability with indefinite NPs like 'one' or universal quantifier NPs like everyone, anyone or nobody, and (iii) incompatibility with an indirect quotation. To illustrate these criteria, observe the life drama example in (22).

- (22) *You're going down the highway, you're having a wonderful time, singing a song, and suddenly – You get into an argument.*

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 749)

The absence of generic statements (i) is a relatively straightforward observation. As Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) observe, the impersonal 'you' here is used in a discourse that is told in "progressive mode" and used to deliver the "scene-setting" portion in narrating an event. Since replacing the impersonal 'you' in (22) with one, everyone or anyone produce a weird result, the rejection of the replaceability criterion (ii) is also borne out. Before examining the last standard, it is essential to recall that although replacing the impersonal 'you' with 'one' is possible for situational insertion and formulation of morals and truisms, replacement with universal quantificational NPs like everybody or anybody is impossible for the formulation of morals and truisms. The sentences in (23) illustrate that situational insertion impersonals are highly replaceable.

- (23)
- a. *You* react instinctively at a time like that.
  - b. *One* reacts instinctively at a time like that.
  - c. *Everyone* reacts instinctively at a time like that.
  - d. *Anyone* reacts instinctively at a time like that.

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 750)

Formulation of truisms and morals are also replaceable—but only with other impersonals, as observed in (24).

- (24)
- a. *You* kill *yourself* to raise *your* kids properly, and guess what happens.
  - b. One kills oneself to raise one's kids properly, and guess what happens.
  - c. ?Everyone kills himself to raise his kids properly, and guess what happens.
  - d. \*Anyone kills himself to raise his kids properly, and guess what happens.

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 750)

As for the (iii) compatibility with the indirect quotation criterion, Kitagawa and Lehrer illustrate the difference of the life drama subtype as shown in (25) since it is the only impersonal type that cannot undergo indirect quotation.

- (25)
- a. Situational Insertion: Rodenmyer says that [you react instinctively at a time like that].
  - b. Formulation of Morals and Truisms: Rodenmyer says that [you kill yourself to raise your kids properly, and guess what happens].
  - c. Life Drama: ?Rodenmyer says that [you are in Egypt admiring the pyramids and feeling that you have really left your own world and time behind when suddenly you meet your next door neighbor from home].

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 751)

The significance of (25) is that it shows how the impersonal pronouns that exhibit generality resist the person shift, which is typically observed in an indirect quotation

in English. However, (25c) is judged to be odd since life drama is employed to narrate a particular event rather than construing a generic statement about the world. This fact is also evident from the test that all ‘life drama’ examples are strictly in the second-person singular as they sound odd if there is a replacement with the impersonal *one* or quantificational NPs like *everyone* and *anyone*. Example (26) demonstrates this comparison.

- (26)      ?*One*/?\**everyone*/\**anyone* is in Egypt admiring the pyramids and feeling that they have really left their own world and time behind when suddenly they meet your next door neighbor from home.

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 751)

Lastly, I will mention the involving ‘you’ category of O'Connor (1994) which is absent in the analyses of Laberge and Sankoff (1979) and Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990). This type of impersonal ‘you’ is utilized to talk about the situations of the speakers’ personal experiences. In this regard, it is very similar to situational insertion. However, involving ‘you’ is different in that it conveys experiences that are entirely alien to the addressee(s). In a way, the speaker attempts to involve the interlocutors in the particular uncommon experience they had. In the work of O'Connor (1994), this uncommon experience was the prisoner stories when they get assaulted with a knife. In (27), she reports the lines of a prisoner who was stabbed.

- (27)      103 it cannot be described  
              104 because the knife. is very cold and.. you know  
              105 it was like you could feel it through the skin partly  
              106 but you couldn’t do nothing about it right. you know.

(O'Connor, 1994, p. 58)

In this excerpt, the prisoner talks about himself using the pronoun ‘you’. Replacing ‘you’s with ‘I’s does not change the truth values, but it might change the desired discourse effect of the speaker.

Involving ‘you’ is used when the speaker is talking about a specific situation they experienced; hence it is difficult to say it conveys a sense of generality.

However, it is certain that while using impersonal ‘you’, the speaker distances themselves from the event, trying to depict the stabbing as a shareable experience, and in O’Connor’s words, “such a ‘you’ is an interpersonal, involving *you* that draws the interlocutor in.” (O’Connor, 1990, p. 57) However, the experiences (in this case, the experience of stabbing) in which involving ‘you’ is used are not generalizable situations. In fact, the speaker is employing this involvement strategy precisely because it is not generalizable.

We can summarize the four impersonal ‘you’ categories as illustrated in Table 2. In this section, we have covered four main types of impersonal pronouns discussed in the literature and various criteria such as generality and call for empathy that are used to differentiate them. Situational insertion and formulation of morals or truisms are used to convey information that applies not only to discourse participants but to an extensive group of people or everybody. In a way, these two impersonal types are more generic than the others. The other two, life drama and involving ‘you’, are employed in more specific contexts, such as inviting the addressee to imagine a scene or an uncommon situation.

Table 2. Summary of Impersonal Usages of Second Persons as Discussed in Laberge and Sankoff (1979), Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990), and O'Connor (1994)

	Situational insertion / self- indexing 'you'	Formulation of morals or truisms / generic 'you'	Life drama	Involving 'you'
Generality	✓	✓	*	*
Inviting the addressee to imagine a situation	✓	*	✓	✓

So far, we have defined and classified impersonal pronouns. In the next section, I will provide the literature that discovers the relationship between personal and impersonal pronouns, which asks the question “what is it in these personal pronouns that make them usable in personal and impersonal contexts?”.

#### 1.4.3 Relationship between personal and impersonal pronouns

The relationship between a personal pronoun and its impersonal equivalent were explained via *homonymy* and *polysemy* in earliest accounts (Whitley, 1978; Bolinger, 1979). The homonymy proposal suggests that the relationship between an impersonal you/we/they and a personal you/we/they is similar to the relationship between word pairs *knight* and *night* or *write* and *right*. This proposal makes the situation very convenient for a morphological system of grammar (Whitley, 1978). This is because the only thing to do under the homonymy proposal is to make up two different

lexical entries for a pronoun: one for the personal version and one for the impersonal. However, as we know, the phonetic similitude between *knight* and *night* or between any homonymous pair is totally accidental. If this applies to the impersonal pronouns, then they are coincidentally homonymous to their personal equivalents.

If we examine the impersonal ‘you’ in terms of homonymy, we see problems start to appear. The homonymy proposal states that personal ‘you’ and impersonal ‘you’ are only similar in their phonetic form without any semantic relationship. Lack of semantic connection is found problematic (Bolinger, 1979; Predelli, 2004) since we observe that in a language, the same accidental situation is applied to many personal pronouns such as *we*, *you*, and *they*. Furthermore, homonymy does not explain why the phenomenon of personal pronouns being used impersonally is likewise observed across languages, even in languages from different language families.

Polysemy, on the other hand, fares better in explaining impersonality. It indicates one word having different but related meanings. If we say that the pronoun ‘you’ is polysemous, we are saying that ‘you’ is ambiguous between two possible logical forms (i.e., two readings): personal and impersonal. This does not necessarily mean we eliminated the coincidence as a factor. According to Apresjan (1974), polysemy can be accidental or regular. Apresjan’s condition for a regular polysemy in a word is satisfied only if there is at least one other word that is distinguished the same way. For example, the word ‘rabbit’ is regularly polysemous between the animal and the meat of the animal because there are other animal names that are polysemous in the same sense, such as the word ‘duck’. It follows that if ‘you’ is regularly polysemous, then it is tantamount to saying that it is ambiguous between personal and impersonal senses the same way as, say, ‘they’ is ambiguous between

its personal and impersonal senses. To conclude, polysemy is a better alternative to explain the semantic difference between personal pronouns and their impersonal uses.

Many accounts in the literature are built on the idea that personal and impersonal readings of a pronoun are structured (Predelli, 2004; Zobel, 2014; Gast, Deringer, Haas, & Rudolf, 2015; Malamud, 2012 and so forth). In these accounts, the semantic content of pronouns is investigated as to how these pronouns can be used personally and impersonally and how the addressee understands from the context the reading intended by the speaker.

Predelli (2004) introduces *gappy contexts* to account for the difference between personal and impersonal pronouns. He observes that indexicals like here, now, today, and so forth do not always refer to their expected referents in the context of utterance. For example, the word ‘now’ in example (28) does not refer to the exact time the sentence is uttered, but to the *context of interpretation*, in his terms.

- (28)        The allied troops cannot wait any longer. The time has now arrived for the invasion of Normandy.

(Predelli, 2004, p. 13)

Here, the word ‘now’ refers to a point of time before the invasion of Normandy, rather than the time of the utterance. Similarly, the first ‘you’ in the sentence (29) does not refer to the addressee in the context of utterance, providing an example for a gappy context. The second you, however, refers to the actual addressee. Here, the context is that a chess teacher is speaking to a master who he thinks made a questionable move.

- (29)        According to all the textbooks, you often get in trouble with that move. But of course you may be able to get away with it.

(Predelli, 2004, p. 12)



Predelli (2004), using the notation of Kamp and Reyle (1993), puts forth that the first sentence in (29) has a hidden generic operator, GEN, that allows the sentence to be interpreted in a way that *you* is a placeholder for any addressee. He utilizes the Discourse Representation Theory to give a truth-conditional formulation for the impersonal ‘you’ in (29) as shown in (30).

$$(30) \quad [x, a] * \rightarrow [x \text{ gets in trouble with that move}]$$

(Predelli, 2004, p. 21)

In (30), *a* stands for the addressee and  $[x, a]$  means that an individual *x* such that  $x=a$ . The entire truth-conditional statement is read as “you often get in trouble with that move” is true if and only if for any *x* such that  $x=a$ , *x* gets in trouble with that move. By proposing the generic operator is present in sentences with impersonal ‘you’, he states that sentences with impersonal pronouns are akin to the formulation of generic sentences. For example, a generic sentence like “a student should not behave like that” can be formulated very similarly as  $[x, a \text{ student}] * \rightarrow [x \text{ should not behave like that}]$  which is read as for any *x* such that *x* is a student, *x* should not behave like that.

Gast et al. (2015) propose the term *target of empathy* to account for impersonal pronouns’ feature of representing very large groups of people. According to Gast et al. (2015), the personal ‘you’ is tied to the addressee by a *referential act* (cf. Searle, 1969) which is depicted via an arrow as in (31). In the following illustrations, ‘a’ stands for the addressee. Within the terminology of this thesis, it will be said that “you refers to a.”

$$(31) \quad \text{you} \longrightarrow a$$

(Gast et al., 2015, p.151)

When it comes to impersonal ‘you’, the *you* refers to a referential set called the *target of empathy* (T) which indicates the set that the addressee is supposed to belong

to. The example in (32) illustrates that an impersonal ‘you’ refers to a larger, loosely defined set that includes the addressee rather than directly referring to the addressee.

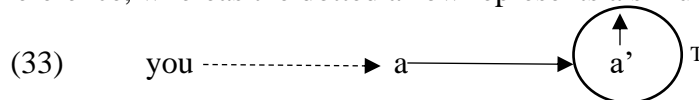
Within the terminology of this thesis, it will be said that “you represents T.”



(Gast et al., 2015, p.151)

The target of empathy is retrieved from the context. In their example “Life insurance pays off triple if you die on a business trip”, the target of empathy is people who happen to die on a business trip. The set is called the “target of empathy” because it is the set of individuals with whom the addressee is called to empathize.

Gast et al. (2015) also use the same tool to explain the life drama category of Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990). Recall that life drama examples recount pieces of the story that are not necessarily generic but are used to invite the addressee to imagine a situation. In order to explain the life drama with the referential act scheme, they use the notion of *simulation*, which is simply described as “putting oneself into the shoes of anyone meeting relevant conditions” (Moltmann, 2010). In (33), the straight arrow is a reference, whereas the dotted arrow represents a simulation.



(Gast et al., 2015, p.151)

In (33), the addressee ‘a’ simulates being in a hypothetical version of themselves, ‘a’’. For instance, in the life drama example (34), the addressee simulates being a \*hypothetical agent in a scene in which they argue while going down a highway.

(34)      You’re going down the highway, you’re having a wonderful time,  
singing a song, and suddenly – you get into an argument

(Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 749)

The accounts so far explained the relationship in terms of how referential properties of impersonal pronouns change in a context. However, there is another point of view

called the lexicalist approach, in which the featural content of the pronoun determines their being personal or impersonal. Malamud (2012) formulates impersonal ‘you’, using the [2<sup>nd</sup>] (hearer) feature of Kratzer (2009), an arbitrary feature [arb] that formulates impersonals accompanied by an uninterpretable generic feature [Gn] that is matched at the sentence level. This featural content of impersonal ‘you’ is distinct from the indexical (personal) ‘you’, which simply refers to the addressee. Hence, the impersonal ‘you’ is a separate lexical item, according to Malamud (2012).

In this section, we have outlined several proposed solutions to the semantic-pragmatic disparity between impersonal and personal uses of a pronoun. Some accounts identified a shift in the designated reference set (Gast et al. 2015; Predelli, 2004), while others (Malamud, 2012; Zobel, 2014) employed lexical analyses that investigate the semantic features of the pronouns. While the accounts in this section mainly focused on the genericity aspect of the impersonal pronouns, in the following section, I will discuss the piece of literature that dealt with broader usage of these items, such as empathy and psychological distancing.

#### 1.4.4 Discursive functions of impersonal pronouns

Numerous discursive effects of impersonal pronouns are noted in the literature, in addition to structural knowledge descriptions which were mentioned in section 0 (Gast et al., 2015; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990; Myers & Lampropoulou, 2012; Stirling & Manderson, 2011). In structural knowledge, the speaker typically cuts the flow of the discourse in the middle to provide a piece of information they deem necessary. An interesting example comes from the work of Stirling and Manderson (2011), which includes excerpts from a patient, Glenda, who had undergone mastectomy due

to breast cancer treatment. At one point, Glenda uses impersonal ‘you’ to provide information about the procedure when receiving radiotherapy as in (35).

- (35) G: [but] then-  
(0.7)  
after-  
ah that was- that was terrible that day.  
I was so angry with them,  
(0.6)  
and I had to have six weeks straight of that every day.  
(0.6)
- R: [mm]
- G: [**you**] go for six weeks-  
is- is the-  
(0.8)
- R: mm=
- G: =time that they give everybody,  
you know six weeks-  
(0.5)  
or if have- if **your** cancer’s worse **you** might go on for a bit  
longer  
(0.8)  
**you** can go on for however long **your** doctor wants **you** but,  
(1.5)  
yeah,  
ah,  
(1.1)  
o- b- it got- it got a little bit easier towards the end

(Stirling & Manderson, 2011, p. 1588)

Each impersonal ‘you’ written in bold refers to any typical patient undergoing similar treatment. Here, while Glenda was talking about her feelings in her interaction with the doctors, she says “and I had to have six weeks straight of that every day,” with the stress on the word ‘straight’. This is the usual procedure, not specific to her. However, many researchers including Stirling and Manderson (2011) would disagree that this is a mere “knowledge sharing” about a procedure. While sharing information is an important and widely observed property of impersonal pronouns, they also bear interactional significance between the speaker and the hearer, such as expressing solidarity. Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) hold that “a sense

of informal camaraderie is often present with the use of impersonal ‘you’ precisely because the speaker assigns a major ‘actor’ role to the addressee.” This observation becomes more apparent if we attempt to replace each impersonal ‘you’ in the example (35) with any other impersonal pronoun, say an impersonal ‘one’, in which case the sense of “informal camaraderie” between the speaker and the hearer will weaken. This camaraderie effect is often called *empathy* in the literature (Gast et al. 2015; Malamud, 2012; Stirling & Manderson, 2011, among others). Malamud (2012) defines two types of empathy: speaker’s empathy and addressee’s empathy. The speaker’s empathy is based on the speaker’s own experience, i.e., the speaker empathizes with or simulates being the person in the situation, as exemplified in (36).

- (36) One raises kids, sacrifices so much for them, and then they move where one cannot even see the grandchildren.

(Malamud, 2012, p. 10)

In addressee’s empathy, the hearers are invited to place themselves in somebody else’s stead. According to Malamud (2012), generally, impersonal ‘one’ brings about the speaker’s empathy, and impersonal ‘you’ has the addressee’s empathy as in (37), whereas impersonal ‘they’ is generally devoid of any empathy effect as in (38).

- (37) In those days you could be thrown in jail for this kind of thing.

(Malamud, 2012, p. 10)

- (38) In those days they could be thrown in jail for this kind of thing.

(Malamud, 2012, p. 10)

O'Connor (1994) examines prisoners’ narration about their traumatic experiences and notes that during narration, speakers switch from personal ‘I’ to impersonal ‘you’ while still talking about their own experiences. She proposes two main reasons for this pronoun shift: involvement and distancing. Involvement is similar to empathy in that “[the speaker] simultaneously invites the interlocutor to share in the

feeling” (O'Connor, 1994, p. 64). She adds, however, that her use of the term involvement slightly deviates from the one in literature (Chafe, 1982; Tannen, 1984, 1985, 1989) since, in the literature, it is generally used in positive contexts in which the hearers mentally empathize with the speaker. However, the criminal stories that are reported in O'Connor's (1994) work are not generally agreeable to the interlocutor. In the stories like (27), when the prisoner shares their experience of being stabbed with the line “you could feel it through the skin,” she finds that “a narrator's switch from ‘I’ to ‘you’, while distancing the speaker from a more personal involvement, also draws the listener closer” (O'Connor, 1994, p. 64). The observation also supports this proposal that the switch from first-person to impersonal second-person generally occurs when the speaker shares their painful experiences in which they feel helpless. Another example is observed by Stirling and Manderson (2011), who examined the impersonal second-person usage of a breast cancer patient who was recently treated with mastectomy. In the narrated passages, the cancer patient, Glenda, switches from ‘I’ to impersonal ‘you’ to imply that the experience is not necessarily personal and isolated—in Stirling and Manderson's words (2011), “*you* is used to avoid this isolation” (Stirling & Manderson, 2011, p. 1598).

To summarize, impersonal pronouns are not only limited to providing generalizable information in a context or narrating an imaginary event in which the addressee is put in the center. Their use in the discourse may involve calling for empathy and the audience's involvement. It may also include a psychological distancing of the speaker from the focus of the event, especially if the speaker does not want to be alone in the shared experience.

## 1.5 Terminology

While the terminology concerning impersonal pronouns is not unified in the literature, the situation gets even more confusing when we want to make distinctions in impersonally used personal pronouns such as impersonal *sen* ‘you’, impersonal noun phrases that act as impersonal pronouns such as impersonal *insan* ‘one, human’ and coindexed pronouns such as *kendim* ‘myself’ or *birbiri* ‘each other’ since they are more often than not polysemous. Therefore, using organized terminology is of critical importance.

In the terminology of this thesis, the term *pronoun* is the umbrella term that encapsulates all kinds of pronouns. This term includes pronouns that will not be examined in this thesis, such as locative pronouns like *burada* ‘here’ or *şurası* ‘there’, demonstrative pronouns like *bu* ‘this’ or *şunlar* ‘those’, and interrogative pronouns like *kim* ‘who’. Nevertheless, the names for the remainder of the pronouns are still an issue.

The name Göksel and Kerslake (2005) used for the sextette ‘*ben, sen, o, biz, siz, onlar*’ is *simple personal pronouns*. This term might be problematic in the between *impersonal* and *personal* usages of these pronouns. Therefore, the term *simple pronouns* will be used to refer to these six pronouns in general—and the terms *personal simple pronouns* and *impersonal simple pronouns* will be used when information about specificity and definiteness is required.

Reflexives and reciprocals will constitute the second group labeled *coindexed pronouns*. Turkish reflexives are *kendim* ‘myself’, *kendin* ‘yourself (singular)’, *kendi(si)* ‘himself, herself, itself’, *kendimiz* ‘ourselves’, *kendiniz* ‘yourself (plural/formal)’, and *kendileri* ‘themselves’. Furthermore, Turkish reciprocals are only found in plural: *birbirimiz*, *birbiriniz* and *birbirleri* all of which mean ‘each

other’ for persons the first-, second-, and third-person plurals respectively. This category is significant for this thesis because coindexed pronouns can be personal and impersonal depending on the pronouns with which they are coindexed. Their personal uses are exemplified in (39) and impersonal uses in (40).

- (39) a. *Sen<sub>i</sub> kendin<sub>i</sub>-e      bunu      neden yap-tı-n?*  
           you yourself-DAT this.ACC      why do-PST-2SG  
           ‘Why did you do this to yourself?’
- b. *pro<sub>i</sub> Avlu-da      birbirleri<sub>i</sub>-ne      saldır-ıyor-lar.*  
                           yard-DAT      each\_other-DAT      attack-PROG-3PL  
                           ‘They fight each other in the courtyard.’
- (40) a. *pro<sub>i</sub> İki      bebeğ-in      var-sa,      kendin<sub>i</sub>-e*  
                   two      baby-2PL.POSS      exist-CND      yourself-DAT  
                   vakit      ayır-a-m-ıyor-sun.  
                   time      allocate-ABIL-NEG-PROG-2SG  
                   ‘If you have two kids, you cannot allocate time for yourself.’
- b. *pro<sub>i</sub> Böyle zaman-lar-da birbirimiz<sub>i</sub>-i      destekle-meli-yiz.*  
                   these time-PL-DAT each\_other-DAT      support-NEC-1PL  
                   ‘We must support each other in such times.’

The reflexive pronoun in (39a) and reciprocal pronoun in (39b) are personal as they are coindexed with pronouns with actual reference. In contrast, their counterparts in (40) are both impersonal since the pronouns they are coindexed with are also impersonal.

Additionally, there are impersonal pronouns like English *one*, German *man* and French *on*. Egerland (2003) calls this type *HOMO-impersonals*, referring to the Latin noun *homo* ‘person’. One can recognize the impersonal use of this Latin



impersonal from Thomas Hobbes' famous apothegm *homo homini lupus* 'A man is a wolf to another man'. *Homo* 'person' is also the etymological root of the French impersonal *on*. However, the main reason this Latin noun earns the name of this type is that using the lexical item for "person" as a source to create an impersonal pronoun is a cross-linguistically observed phenomenon. German and Swedish *man* and French *on* can be given as examples as they are derived from content words that mean 'person'. Egerland (2003) suggests the formula in (41) to model the diachronic change from the lexical item for 'person' to an impersonal pronoun.

- (41) The diachronic development of "HOMO" impersonals  
Lexical DP > Impersonal generic pronoun > Impersonal arbitrary pronoun

(Egerland, 2003, p. 93)

Turkish impersonal NPs *insan* and *adam*, which respectively mean 'a human' and 'a man', can be placed under this category. Although *insan* and *adam* are content words that are frequently used as their first sense 'human' and 'man', when they are used impersonally, we will use the notation of Egerland (2003) and call these two impersonals as HOMO-impersonals. Taking everything into consideration, we can summarize the Turkish pronominal system that will be used in this thesis as in Figure 1.

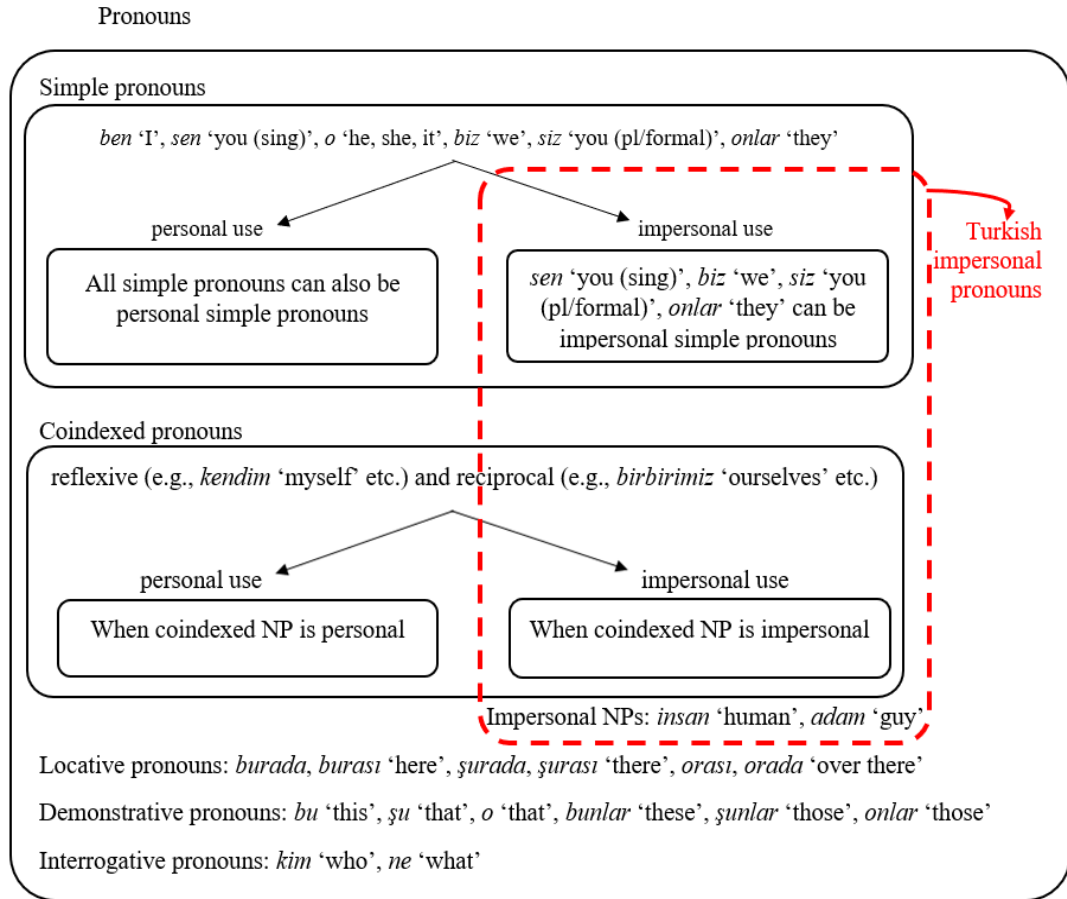


Figure 1. Classification of Turkish pronouns as used in this thesis

### 1.6 Aim of the thesis

In this thesis, I will investigate the pragmatic and interactional properties of Turkish impersonal pronouns. Turkish is unfortunately very understudied in terms of impersonal pronouns, let alone their distinct pragmatic uses. Almost all of the literature discussed in this chapter focus on impersonal pronouns in the Indo-European languages. Hence, analyzing a different language, such as Turkish, which belongs to the Turkic language family, provides valuable insight into how impersonal pronouns vary cross-linguistically. Additionally, investigating pragmatic and interactional aspects of impersonal pronouns using naturally occurring data is relatively few in the literature (Myers & Lampropoulou, 2012; O'Connor, 1994;

Stirling & Manderson, 2011). These aspects are especially significant for impersonal pronouns because the impersonality of a pronoun can only be deduced from the context. Each sentence with an impersonal pronoun has a personal reading.

Therefore, in this thesis, I aim to utilize naturally occurring language data to investigate and provide arguments for the points below.

- i. What are the Turkish impersonal pronoun types, and how is Turkish similar or different from other languages in terms of impersonal pronoun categorization?
- ii. When, in what contexts does the Turkish language employ impersonal pronouns? How are stance and positioning applied through impersonal pronouns by speakers?
- iii. How and to what extent can Turkish impersonals be used in narratives?

## CHAPTER 2

### DATA

In order to inquire about the pragmatic use of impersonal pronouns in Turkish as they take place in the interaction, all of the analysis is conducted on naturally occurring language rather than hypothetically proposed sentences. For this thesis, the conversations are recorded via mobile phone recording applications, Zoom, and Skype. These are conversations with an informal tone usually conducted with friends and family. In total, I have listened to eleven hours of speech from such recordings and transcribed the necessary parts of them. Most of the conversations are dialogues with two participants; however, four recordings include more than two people talking.

The details of the data and how they are used in this thesis will be detailed in the following sections. Section 2.1 will explain how the data is constructed, and section 2.2 will share further details of the data. Section 2.3 provides information about how the data is transcribed. Lastly, section 2.4 establishes what will count as tokens in the recordings.

#### 2.1 Construction of the data set

To collect the data set, I asked for consent from the participants before the conversation. If they answered positively, at a random point in the exchange, I asked again to start the recording. Participants are informed at both the beginning and the ending of the recordings. Prior to the data collection, all of the discourse participants in my recordings were aware that their speech would be used in academic work.

All of the recordings included close friends or family members, all of whom are native Turkish speakers. Due to the lockdown caused by the precautions against the COVID-19 epidemic, however, seven out of twelve recordings could not be done face-to-face. These online conversations are conducted and recorded on one of two applications: Skype and Zoom. In face-to-face ones, recording applications on mobile phones are used. In all recordings, speakers saw the faces of the other participants.

## 2.2 Data

The recordings amount to eleven hours of speech, which were later transcribed. The details of individual recordings that were used in this thesis are listed in Table 3 below. Some of the recording pairs, like 2-3 and 4-5, have the same speakers in the conversation. In total, the recordings have 19 different speakers from various dialects. The recording length was not established before the talk, usually depended on the availability of the participants.

Table 3. The Details of the Recordings

recording	duration	recording application	number of speakers	genders and ages of speakers	dialects
1	42:06	Skype	2	25, male; 29, male	Konya, Ankara
2	1:48:18	Zoom	2	26, male; 29, male	Konya, Istanbul
3	49:04	Zoom	2	26, male; 29, male	Konya, Istanbul
4	48:30	Zoom	2	26, male; 26, male	Konya, Maraş
5	33:19	Zoom	2	26, male; 26, male	Konya, Maraş
6	29:11	Zoom	2	26, male; 26, male	Konya
7	26:34	Skype	2	26, male; 26, male	Konya
8	1:00:24	Mobile	4	27, male; 27, male; 27, female, 27, female	Istanbul
9	1:27:55	Mobile	6	27, male; 25, male, 23, female; 55, male; 49, female; 75, male; 75 female	Konya, Erzincan
10	33:29	Mobile	2	27, male; 27, male	Konya
11	1:00:00	Mobile	3	25, male; 25, male; 25, male	Konya
12	1:20:37	Mobile	3	26, male; 26, male; 26, male	Istanbul

### 2.3 Transcription

The transcription method I used is based on Jefferson Transcription System utilized in the conversation analyses (Jefferson, 2004). The details of this annotation scheme are provided in Appendix. However, for the purposes of this thesis, only relevant parts of the Jefferson system were included. For example, tonality and speed of speech are not marked since these details were often not significant in the narrative, positioning, and stance-taking analysis of pronouns.

During transcription, I used pseudonyms in place of personal names in the conversation to preserve privacy. Other proper names such as cities and names were kept. I also changed the names of the discourse participants and gave their initial letters rather than the names themselves.

While translating the data to English, I did not translate the discourse interjections that are difficult or impossible to translate—rather, they are written in italics. Some of the most common ones of these untranslated words are listed below with their use.

- *ya, ya:* and *yaaa* is used very productively to express surprise, shock, and regret as well as merely interjection with no particular meaning.
- *kanka, kanki, olm* and *abi* mean something like ‘buddy’ and are used colloquially among close friends.
- *haa* is like ‘ooh’ and it either expresses surprise or means “now I get it.”
- *şe-* or *şey* are used frequently for repairs and as a replacement for forgotten words. When a speaker uses *şey*-repair they would often choose to utter the forgotten word immediately after *şey*. For example: *Hediyeyi şeye verdim-Ali’ye* ‘I gave the present to *şey*- to Ali.’

I use double parentheses not only to express hard-to-transcribe conversation items such as “((sniffs))”, but also to indicate the references of some pronouns that are difficult to infer from the segment. For example, in the translation “you prepare a sample work, and then you cram writing it ((=thesis)) in order to present it,” one may suppose that *it* actually refers to the sample work in the sentence. However, the context brings another reference that fits here better, which is indicated via double parentheses.

After transcriptions, I marked different impersonal pronouns with different colors. Additionally, I annotated different pragmatic types of colored tokens such as situational insertion, life drama and so forth. However, other grammatical criteria like the syntactic position of the pronoun and identity of the speaker, such as gender and age of the participants, are not annotated. The following section will explain what constitutes a token and what does not.

## 2.4 Tokens

Several counting criteria for establishing what counts as a token are as follows. These criteria are exemplified in (42). All impersonal pronouns, both overt and covert, are counted as tokens which include coindexed impersonal pronouns as well. Emphatic coindexed pronouns like *sen kendin* ‘you, yourself’ are only counted as a single token. Immediate repairs, including *şey*-repairs are also counted as one token if an impersonal pronoun is being repaired.

- (42) a) All overt and covert pronouns, including coindexed ones, count as new tokens. The following excerpt, for example, bears four tokens.
- The first one is covert: *[pro] ilişkinin* ‘your relationship.’ The second one is overt: *sen... çekip çevirebiliyosan* ‘if you can look after...’ The



third pronoun is the impersonal coindexed *kendini* ‘yourself.’ Finally,

the last pronoun is a covert impersonal third-person plural: [*pro*]

*diyemiyolar* ‘they can’t say.’

mühim olan- mühim olan şu yani tamam mı (.) 111  
nedir onun adı (1) aileye bi ihtiyaç **ilişkinin**  
kalmaması (.) eğer **sen kendini çekip**  
**çevirebiliyosan** (.) bişey **diyemiyolar**

Eng:

what’s important is- what’s important is this  
okay(.) 111 whatchamacallit (1) that **you no**  
**longer have** a dependency relationship to **the**  
**family** (.) if you can look after **yourself** (.)  
they can’t say anything

b) Repairs do not produce new tokens. The following example only  
contains one impersonal simple pronoun.

daha paralel çalışan daha hızlığ (.) işlemler  
yapan şeyler **şeyman lazım- kullanman lazım**

Eng:

**you have to şey- you have to use** şeys  
(=things)) that work faster and in a more  
parallel fashion

Bearing these token criteria in mind, the tokens found in the data is summarized in

Table 4.

Table 4. Number of Tokens in Each Recording

recording	Impersonal <i>sen/siz</i> ‘you sing/pl’ tokens	impersonal <i>onlar</i> ‘they’ tokens	impersonal <i>biz</i> ‘we’ tokens	impersonal <i>insan</i> ‘human’ tokens	impersonal <i>adam</i> ‘man’ tokens
1	47	5	5	3	0
2	60	20	33	0	0
3	46	9	10	0	4
4	15	4	0	0	2
5	0	3	0	0	0
6	21	10	0	0	0
7	30	3	0	5	0
8	26	4	0	0	0
9	12	8	1	5	0
10	64	0	25	2	1
11	64	4	0	0	8
12	13	7	1	1	0
Total	398	77	75	16	15

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Since this thesis investigates the pragmatic aspect of Turkish impersonal pronouns, the theoretical frameworks adopted in this thesis are the ones that can highlight the place of these pronouns in an interaction. In other words, the analytical methods that are able to elicit the significance and impact of a lexical item for the flow of the discourse are utilized. These tools are stance and positioning.

Additionally, in the course of the analysis, it became clear that impersonal pronouns are systematically used in narratives, particularly in hypothetical ones. Moreover, in all narratives, they are placed in predictable places. While stance-taking and positioning are also insightful for the use of impersonal pronouns in narratives, the narrative analysis will be employed to highlight the storytelling aspect of impersonal pronouns.

In what follows, I will present the three aforementioned analytical methods: stance, positioning, and narrative analysis.

#### 3.1 Stance

Stance is defined in various ways by many authors. Jaffe (2009) defines stance-taking as “taking up a position concerning the form or content of one’s utterance” (p. 3), underlining the fact that every utterance more or less has it. This is because every utterance is in relation to a stance object in a context. A stance object is defined by Du Bois (2007) as the “target toward which the stance is being directed – for example, *what* is claimed to be incredible or great, *where* the speaker displays a desire to go, and so on” (p. 147). This definition also suggests that the object of

stance can be not only material but also things, ideas, places, utterances and so forth. According to Du Bois (2007), the stance is, first and foremost, a public act that has a social meaning and is used to “evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects” (p. 163).

Stance objects correspond to the notion of targets of empathy in the proposition of Gast et al. (2015). Recall that Gast et al. gave the example “Life insurance pays off triple if you die on a business trip,” where the target of empathy was the people who happen to die on a business trip. This loosely specified group of people can be regarded as stance objects since impersonal pronouns, consistently deliver stance-taking towards the groups of people they represent.

Du Bois (2007) mentions three main types of stances affective stance, epistemic stance, and alignment. First, affective stances are the speakers' feelings and emotions towards stance objects. For example, liking something, disliking someone, and finding a statement awful or pleasant are all affective stances in the discourse. This stance can be positive or negative, depending on the quality of emotion. Roughly, liking is a positive affective stance, and disliking is a negative affective stance.

Secondly, epistemic stances have to do with the speakers' knowledge about the stance objects. If a speaker takes a positive epistemic stance, that means they are knowledgeable about the matter—a negative stance implies the opposite. A critical remark must be made here: stance is not usually explained in a binary opposition like positive versus negative. It should rather be understood as a continuum. For example, ‘I cannot live without him’ indicates much stronger affection than ‘I like him, he is nice.’ Likewise, some positive epistemic stances are much stronger than others.

Finally, alignment and disalignment is an activity between stance-takers, and it indicates joining or being away from a stance of another discourse participant. If speaker A agrees with the opinion of speaker B, it is said that A aligns with B. If there is a disagreement, the stance is then disalignment. This makes alignment slightly different from affective and epistemic stance since it is not a relationship between a stance-taker and a stance object—rather, it is used to calibrate two different stances taken.

### 3.2 Positioning

Both Jaffe's and Du Bois' definition includes a notion that stance is deeply tied with, namely *positioning*. Positioning represents and forms a person's personal and moral characteristics, which, in turn, make up personal stories about the self (Davies & Harré, 2007; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991). To give an example, one can position oneself as morally superior, more knowledgeable, an advice-giver, or an advice seeker. A father who reminds his child of a rule, for example, is positioning himself as an advice-giver and, perhaps, morally superior. Similarly, a person who is late and asks desperately for directions positions themselves as an advice-taker and less knowledgeable.

Positioning is not necessarily established for good. They can be altered or maintained by participants. To illustrate this within a context, let's imagine two close friends, A and B, and add that A volunteers in an environmentalist association. Suppose A warns his friend B when B is about to ask for several extra plastic bags in shopping. A, here, positions himself as morally higher or environmentally sensitive. This act simultaneously positions B lower in these positions. If B agrees to A's positioning by complying with his advice or apologizing, then the positioning is

maintained. However, B can also resist. For example, he may say "Ever since you volunteered in that place, you became so nosey!" This re-positioning by B conflicts with the moral positioning of A. By uttering that sentence, B positions A as somebody who is overexcited by his activism and gets increasingly irritating because of it. B simultaneously self-positions as someone who is needlessly interfered. The technical terms for A's initial and B's conflicting positioning are called first order and second order positioning, respectively (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999). Naturally, different positioning orders occur when a disagreement happens in which one of the discourse participants challenges the proposed positions.

### 3.3 Narrative analysis

Labov (1972), building on Labov and Waletzky (1967), describes the structure of a personal experience narrative (henceforth PEN). He defines narratives as "one method of recapitulating past experiences by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred" (Labov, 1972, p. 359-360). For an experience to be a narrative, Labov and Waletzky (1967) propose it must at least contain one *temporal juncture* in which two events are temporally ordered. For example, "I saw the rabbit" and "the rabbit started to run" can only be narrative if a speaker puts them like "I saw the rabbit and it started to run." "The rabbit started to run when I saw it" cannot be a narrative since it compromises temporal order.

In Labov's scheme, a full PEN consists of six parts: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The first part is abstract, in which the speaker introduces the narrative they are about to tell. These sentences function as openers as they demand the attention of the hearer(s)—sentences like

“Did I tell you about X?” or “You won’t believe what I saw this morning.” The orientation part of the narrative sets the stage for the event, answering questions like “who, when, what, where?” The complicating action part is the place where the crux of the events happens. This narrative part is generally verb-heavy since the primary action sequence is reported. The evaluation part is the main point of the narrative, where the question “So what?” is answered. A felicitous narrative (that is not met with “so what?” by the hearer) has a point that is related to the context—and that is fulfilled by the evaluation part. According to Labov, evaluation can be external or embedded. External evaluations interrupt the flow of the narrative to tell the point, whereas embedded evaluations are scattered across the narrative for example through the choice of lexical items. The resolution part simply concludes the sequence of events, and the coda signals that the narrative is over. Codas can also remind the main point of the narrative to return to the discourse, “bridging the gap between the moment of time at the end of the narrative proper and the present” (Labov, 1972, p. 365).

In short, complicating action and resolution represent the bulk of the events and are essential to any narrative structure, whereas the rest of the parts add to the structure of the narrative and are optional. Furthermore, not all of the parts are required to follow their order in the structure. For example, orientation and evaluation segments can be found scattered throughout the narrative. The placements of some other parts like abstract and coda are fixed.

In his seminal work, Labov (1972) studies the narratives that are told as an answer to the question “Were you ever in a situation where you were in danger of being killed, where you said to yourself—‘This is it’?” Therefore, the answers to this question included narratives in which events and personal feelings were plentiful.

However, not every piece of narrative is as fortunate. There are various other types of storytelling that this type of formal definition might exclude. For instance, there are hypothetical scenarios where a temporally ordered event is constructed to illustrate an example or prospective stories where the speaker projects what might happen in the future are not counted within the definition. Over time, the narrative possibilities are expanded when narrative analysts consider more and more narratives. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008), criticizing the rigid nature of previous narrative definitions, introduced “small stories,” which are mini-narratives that capture a much wider possibility of storytelling. In their words, they “[capture] a gamut of underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events and shared (known) events, but [they] also [capture] allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusal to tell” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 381). Baynham (2011) also includes narrative types other than personal experience narratives in his research that tackles professional contexts. He states that generic/iterative narratives recount not a particular past event but events that repeatedly or typically occur. In *hypothetical or future narratives*, the speaker tells an imaginative or prospective story; in *negated narratives*, the speaker talks about what did not or did not happen. A sentence like “Nobody will ever come in life and solve all of your problems, making you the happiest man” can be a negated narrative example. These types of narratives are, as Baynham states, rarer than others.

These non-PEN narratives are also fertile places to observe impersonal pronouns. As will be explored in Chapter 6, they quite productively construct hypothetical situations in which the temporal order of events is sustained. Nonetheless, there is no unified term to capture such imaginary stories. Throughout



this thesis, the term “hypothetical narrative” will be used to represent all narrative types that follow event chains that are imaginary and tied together via temporal and causal junctures.

Structural definitions of narratives such as Labov’s are also criticized for isolating the narratives from the rest of the discourse (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Gimenez, 2010), construing them as an independent and self-contained unit. It is scarce, however, when a narrative is told without reason in a discourse. Therefore, some researchers use a different approach that includes interactional analyses. Wooffitt (1992), for example, tackles narratives to analyze paranormal stories in research interviews, focusing on how narrative goals are achieved interactionally instead of how narratives are structured.

## CHAPTER 4

### TURKISH IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS

This chapter presents Turkish impersonal pronouns, their distinct pragmatic uses, and their fit into established categories in the literature. The findings here are significant because they will not only be the groundwork for the coming chapters that deal with the interactional properties of pronouns, but they will also highlight the status of Turkish impersonals as compared to their counterparts in other languages examined.

Turkish, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, has two main types of impersonal pronouns. The first type is impersonal pronouns, whose primary use is personal. These are *sen/siz* ‘you (informal/formal)’, *biz* ‘we’, and *onlar* ‘they’. The second type consists of HOMO-impersonals, which are lexical items that were grammaticalized into impersonal pronouns. The Turkish language has two pronouns of this second type: *insan* ‘human’ and *adam* ‘man’. As observed in Table 4, the second type of impersonal pronouns is much less frequent as their usage is restricted to specific circumstances—impersonal-*adam* is only observed in hypothetical narratives and impersonal-*insan* is only used to depict situations that apply to anybody. Another thing to note about Turkish impersonal pronouns is that Turkish does not have any pronouns such as German *man* or English *one* whose essential use is impersonal. Turkish HOMO-impersonals *insan* ‘human’ and *adam* ‘man’ are different from languages like English and German in that *insan* and *adam* are high-frequency content words.

Turkish uses impersonal pronouns quite productively to realize a variety of pragmatic effects such as empathy, psychological distancing, solidarity, and so forth—most of the pragmatic usages are similar to the features discussed in the

literature section. In what follows, each Turkish impersonal pronoun will be examined in terms of pragmatics.

#### 4.1 Impersonal-*sen*

Impersonal-*sen* ‘you’ is, by a large margin, the most used impersonal pronoun in Turkish. The frequency of this impersonal is also visible in Table 4, amassing more tokens than the rest of the pronouns combined.

The data includes many types of impersonal-*sen* examples—containing all three pragmatic types of impersonal second-person pronouns that had been discussed in Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) and Laberge and Sankoff (1979): situational insertion, moral or truism formulation, and life drama. However, no example of O’Connor’s (1994) involving ‘you’ is encountered. The quantity of each kind of impersonal second-person pronouns in the data is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Number of Tokens in Different Types of Impersonal *sen* ‘you’

Type	Situational insertion	Formulation of truisms and morals	Life drama
Impersonal- <i>sen</i> tokens	163	186	49

The most common pragmatic uses of impersonal-*sen* is situational insertion and truism or moral formulation. Situational insertion is when the speaker recounts some of their own experience while generalizing the experience. Doing so positions the situation as typical and could happen to practically anyone. Morals and truism

formulation are not only used to make moral claims but also to express general statements about the world. By using impersonal pronouns to make moral claims while evaluating a situation, the speaker involves the speaker. Finally, life drama, the least frequent of the three, calls the addressee to imagine a scene or a situation using impersonal pronouns. The examples in (43) illustrate that the Turkish language contains all three pragmatic classes of impersonal pronouns.

(43) Situational insertion:

- a. 1 ııı klasik çince de yani  
2 bilerek çok muğlak şeyler var ve hani  
3 **nasıl (.) sölenceni bilmen için- hani**  
4 **o anlamda söylenmiş olduğunu bilmen için**  
5 **daha önce duyman falan gerekiyo,**  
6 **o geleneğin içinden çıkman gerekiyo**  
7 gibi

Eng:

- 1 ııı in classical chinese there are  
2 deliberately ambiguous things and like  
3 **in order for you to know how to**  
4 **pronounce- like**  
4-5 **to know that it is said in that sense**  
6 **you have to have heard it before,**  
6-7 **like you need to be part of that**  
7 **tradition**

- b. 1 yaaa p- (.) çocuk gapalı gutu ya (.)  
2 yani (.) **konusuyosun ama**  
3 **sırlarına hiçbir türlü erişemiyosun.**

Eng:

- 1 yaaa p- (.) the guy is a closed box ya  
(.)  
2 I mean (.) **you talk to him**  
3 **but you can never attain his secrets.**

Moral or truism formulation:

- c. **istanbulda çocu- çocuğu sokağa salamazsın ki**  
**yani**

Eng:

**I mean you cannot just let the kid out in**  
**Istanbul**

Life drama:

- d. 1 büyük bi şehir var **birazcık gidiosun**  
2 **ıı küçük ıı evlerin olduğu-**

3 yerleşkelerin olduğu yerlere gidiyosun,  
 4 ilerliyosun ilerliyosun  
 5 sonra büyük bi şehre geliyosun.

Eng:

1 there is a large city then **you proceed**  
**a little bit**  
 2-3 **ii arrive at a place with little**  
**houses- settlements,**  
 4 **then you proceed and proceed,**  
 5 **then you arrive at a large city.**

The data included many instances of Whitley's (1978) 'procedure' sub-type, which is used to talk about instructions. This type can be included under the type formulation of truisms and morals because it is a general fact shared via impersonal pronouns even though the name of the pragmatic category is slightly misleading—not all facts have to be truisms or moral statements. Instead of talking about a general fact about the world (truism), procedure impersonals talk about a fact about a particular situation such as a recipe or an instruction. The segment in (44) presents impersonal second-person pronouns used to depict a procedure.

- (44)
- 1 **kavanozları, kaynar suyun içine atıyosun,**  
 2 kapaklarını normalde camı da yıkamak lazım  
 3 onu yapmadık, sosu hazırladık abi (.)  
 4 **alıyosun** tarifi de vereyim.  
 5 iküüz gıram acı biber. sivri biber  
 6 **onu alıyon abi** dokuz küloğram filan da  
 7 bursa domatesi ya da normal domates,  
 8 **alıyon** (.) domatesleri normal  
 9 **menemenlik yapıyosan kesiyosun,**  
 10 **eğer sosluk yapıyosan**  
 11 **rendeliyosun atıyon** şeye- sıvıyağa

Eng:

1 **you throw the jars in the boiling water,**  
 2 normally the caps- the glass must be  
 washed as well,  
 3 we did not do that, we prepared the sauce  
 abi (.)  
 4 **you take them** let me give the recipe as  
 well.  
 5 two hundred grams hot pepper. long green  
 pepper  
 6 **you take it abi** nine kilograms of

7        Bursa tomato or normal tomato,  
 8-9     **you take them** (.) if you are going for  
          normal menemen you dice the tomatoes,  
 10      **if you are doing it for sauce**  
 11      **you grate them and toss them to the**  
          **vegetable oil**

The common feature that is visible in all cases is that impersonal-*sen* closes down the psychological gap between the hearer and the speaker—it is less formal and more sincere than, for example, impersonal passive. Even more neutral impersonal-*sen* examples, such as procedures in example (44), sound much more distant and formal when impersonal-*sen* is replaced with impersonal passive. If we replace the impersonal-*sen* in line 1 with an impersonal passive, for instance, the shift in the register is very clearly observable. *Kavanozlar kaynar suyun içine atılır* ‘The jars are thrown in the boiling water.’ is not something a friend would say while giving a recipe—it rather sounds like something written on a blog post or a recipe book.

#### 4.2 Impersonal-*onlar*

Impersonal-*onlar* ‘they’ is also one of the most frequent Turkish impersonal pronouns despite having the one-fifth quantity of impersonal-*sen*. Turkish impersonal-*onlar*, like impersonal ‘they’ in English, expresses psychological distance from the set of people that the pronoun represents. This observation is borne out in the data as well as shown in the example (45).

(45)     1        mühim olan-  
          2        mühim olan şu yani tamam mı  
          3        (.) ııı nedir onun adı  
          4        (1) aileye bi ihtiyaç ilişkinin kalmaması  
          5        (.) eğer sen kendini çekip çevirebiliyosan  
          6        (.) **bişey diyemiyolar**  
          Eng:  
          1        what’s important is-  
          2        what’s important is this okay  
          3        (.) ııı whatchamacallit

- 4 (1) that you no longer have a dependency  
relationship to the family  
5 (.) if you can look after yourself  
6 (.) **they can't say anything**

This example expresses a conflict between a person and his family where the person's goal is to achieve independence from his family. Here impersonal-*onlar* at the end represents one's family, which is not presented in an empathetic manner. Furthermore, there are also numerous examples of impersonal-*sen* in the passage such as *eğer sen kendini çekip çevirebiliyosan bişey diyemiyolar* 'if you can look after yourself they can't say anything.' This *sen* is positioned in opposition to the impersonal-*onlar* since it represents the younger people who seek independence from their families.

#### 4.3 Impersonal-*biz*

Impersonal-*biz* 'we' is trickier since its primary use in Turkish is didactic, abundant in public service ads, educational books, and child-directed speech. Although there are no such examples in the data, there are other types of impersonal-*biz*, as shown in (46).

- (46) 1 **biz çok farkında değiliz** ve kimse  
2 bun'üzerinde konuşmuyo ama  
3 son böyle kırk yıl içinde falan (.)  
4 elli yıl içinde falan  
5 insanlık tarihinin en büyük devrimi  
6 gerçekleşti as'nda  
Eng:  
1 **we are not well aware of it** and nobody  
2 talks about this but  
3 in the last forty years or so (.)  
4 fifty years or so  
5 the biggest revolution of human history  
6 has happened actually

Here, the impersonal-*biz* probably represents humanity or the speaker's fellow compatriots. Hence the empathy effect is present here since the speaker himself is included in this group. The most significant difference of impersonal-*biz* is that the speaker and the addressee are also included in the group this pronoun represents. Unlike impersonal-*you*, which always implies that the speaker is thinking positively about the target of empathy, and impersonal-*they*, which the speaker thinks negatively, impersonal-*biz* does not show such a predictable and consistent pattern.

#### 4.4 Impersonal-*insan*

Impersonal-*insan* 'human' is a HOMO-impersonal used similarly to impersonal-*sen* in that it also represents people about whom the speaker has positive feelings. Its use can also be pragmatically categorized similar to impersonal-*sen*'s—it can be used in situational insertion and morals or truisms formulation contexts. In the data, seven of the 16 impersonal-*insan* tokens are situational insertion, and the rest is moral or truism formulation. Example (47) below provides an example for both usages.

(47) Situational Insertion:

1 aynen söylediğin üzere  
2 **insan büyüdükçe şeyi farkediyö**  
3 (.) türkiyede abi adamlar- (.) hıhı  
4 devleti besliyorsun yan' naparsan yap  
5 devleti besliyorsun

Eng:

1 exactly, as you have said  
2 **one realizes şey as growing up**  
3 (.) in Turkey abi people- (.) hıhı  
4 you feed the state, I mean whatever you do  
5 you feed the state

Moral or truism formulation:

1 **insan harvırdı sevmese bile**  
2 **şöle bi şeaapar**  
3 **sinirlense okula çıkar bi şöle**  
4 **ismine bakar geri girer yani ihihihihih**  
5 harvırt bu abi



Eng:

- 1     **even if one does not like Harvard**  
2-4   **he would do şe- even when he is angry he**  
       **would go out, look at the name ((of the**  
       **university)), and would go in again**  
       ihihihihih  
5     this is harvard *abi*

Impersonal-*insan* having similar pragmatic usages to impersonal-*sen* pronouns is partly expected from Laberge and Sankoff's (1979) categorization since they included French impersonal *on* 'one' as a possible candidate for situational insertion—albeit it is not a perfect translation of *insan*. Although Göksel and Kerslake (2005) translate *insan* into English as *one*, neither English *one* nor French *on* are good translations since *insan* is much more loaded and sided than those pronouns—it exhibits more personality. “A person” also sounds much more neutral than impersonal-*insan* does. This will be evident when we bring stance-taking and positioning frameworks into the picture in Chapter 5.

#### 4.5 Impersonal-adam

Impersonal-*adam* ‘man’, the only gendered impersonal pronoun in Turkish, generally covers a more specific space in discourse. Especially in hypothetical narratives, *adam* represents a single unspecific person with his own interests. Because of its unspecified but non-generic nature *adam* manages to bear a little more personality than the other pronouns. (48) exemplifies such a use of this HOMO-impersonal.

- (48)   1     bürokrasi işleri sıkıcılaştırıyo  
       2     ama her gü- her şeyi transparan yaptı için  
       3     (.) mesela işte eee  
       4     giriş halinin şeyini ııı ı  
       5     sıteyti belli olsa muğaynede efenimesöliym  
       6     (.) hangi aşamada kim (.) tamir (.)  
       7     düzeyine girşti kim tamir düzeyinden çıktı  
       8     bu belli olsa (.)

9      **adam şeyin- şey riskini alamaz yani,**  
 10     **o parçanın- o parça çalındığında**  
 11     **ortaya çıkacak itibar kaybının**  
 12     **riskini alamaz yani**  
 Eng:  
 1      bureaucracy makes business boring  
 2      but every- since it makes everything  
       transparent  
 3      (.) for example eee  
 4      if its (=a car's) entry 111 I  
 5      state is defined in the inspection  
 6-7    (.) at which stage who (.) entered the  
       repair process, who removed it from the  
       reparation stage,  
 8      if that is defined (.)  
 10     **the guy cannot take the risk of şey-**  
 11-12 **the reputation lost when the stealing of**  
       **the car parts is revealed**

Here, the *adam* 'man' represents a hypothetical car mechanic suspected of stealing car parts and needs strict bureaucracy not to do so. Another thing to notice here is the negativity of this representation which is not unique to this particular example. The overwhelming majority of the *adam* impersonals in the data are used to represent the antagonist of the story or an unlikeable person in general. In that, impersonal-*adam* is slightly different than other impersonals since it represents a single non-descript individual.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

In this section, I have exemplified how Turkish simple pronouns and some other NPs called HOMO-impersonals can be used as impersonal pronouns. I have claimed that most of the established impersonal classes, such as situational insertion, and life drama, are valid for the Turkish data. I have also shown that Turkish impersonal pronouns do carry an empathy effect for impersonal-*you* and distance effect for the impersonal-*they*. In addition to confirming the predictions of the literature,

I have also introduced how Turkish employs impersonal-*biz* and HOMO-impersonals. Impersonal-*biz* is an underresearched impersonal pronoun used as frequently as impersonal-*they* in the data. It loosely refers to unspecified people that include the speaker and the hearer.

HOMO-impersonals are content words used as pronouns. In Turkish, they are *insan* ‘human’ and *adam* ‘man’. They are found relatively rarer compared to simple impersonal pronouns. In terms of discursive properties, they are similar to impersonal-*you* and impersonal-*onlar* respectively. Their pragmatics will be investigated in detail in Chapter 5.

The examples in this section included isolated impersonal instances and did not make strong claims about the use of language in turn-taking interaction. The following three sections will take into account the data in a much more detailed context to grasp how impersonal pronouns are utilized by discourse participants to position themselves and take stances in discourse.

## CHAPTER 5

### STANCE AND POSITIONING BY IMPERSONALS

In this section, the frameworks of stance and positioning will be utilized to understand the interactional role of Turkish impersonal pronouns. After a brief introduction as to the usage of these two frameworks will be employed to analyze the naturally occurring data, individual examples from the data will be tackled.

#### 5.1 Introduction

The most crucial aspect of the stance-taking framework to understand how the speakers use impersonal pronouns to take stances in the discourse is the relationship between a stance object and an impersonal pronoun. As indicated in the literature section, as opposed to personal pronouns, impersonal pronouns do not ‘refer’ to specific people but to people in general or a loosely defined collective (Siewierska, 2004). This loosely defined set of people is called a target of empathy (Gast et al., 2015), in the stance framework, however, it corresponds to a stance object. In other words, the loosely defined group that an impersonal pronoun represents are the stance objects towards which the discourse participants can take affective, epistemic, and aligning stances.

In the following sections, it will be argued that the stances that impersonal pronouns bring about are more or less stable and change little from one conversation to another. When it comes to positioning, the impersonal pronouns cause a little more fluctuation here. In other words, the positions that speakers take by using impersonals vary more from context to context.

An affective stance is used in an utterance by a speaker to convey feelings about a stance object which can be a material thing, as well as an idea or a statement. Epistemic stance is the stance of knowledge, whether or not the speaker is knowledgeable about the stance object. As for alignment, it is a stance-taking act where the speaker chooses to agree or disagree with a previous stance. Impersonal pronouns almost always indicate an affective stance. Alignment by impersonals, while occurring fewer than affective stance, is not rare either.

Each stance-taking action also simultaneously positions the speaker. Especially in situational insertion instances where the speaker actually talks about themselves despite using an impersonal pronoun, self-positioning is always observed. Positioning can also be carried out to position other discourse participants through the camaraderie expressed via certain types of impersonal pronouns—impersonal-*sen* and possibly impersonal-*biz*. The most frequent positionings achieved by speakers through the use of impersonals in the data are ‘morally superior’, ‘more knowledgeable’, ‘understandable’, ‘disadvantaged’, ‘victimized’. The following sections, which tackle each impersonal pronoun, provide examples to eventually support the claim that impersonal pronouns play a critical role for Turkish speakers in terms of taking stance and positioning.

## 5.2 Impersonal-*sen*

Cases of impersonal-*sen* exhibit very predictable stance-taking patterns in terms of affective stance. When a speaker utilizes the pronoun, they almost always bear positive feelings towards the group that impersonal-*sen* represents. This positive feeling corresponds to a positive affective stance in the stance framework.

Let us first examine one of the relatively weak affective stance examples in

(49) before investigating more prominent stances. In the following excerpt, the bold part has an impersonal pronoun being used to take a weak affective stance.

- (49) Context: The discourse participants S, M and B compare the advantages and disadvantages of working freelance and working at an office. All participants are friends, albeit not close ones.
- S:  
1 bi de ben iş ve ev hani-  
2 iş ve evin farklı fiziksel birer  
3 ortam olmasını seviyorum hani
- M:  
4 evet
- S:  
5 burası benim dinlenme yerim,  
6 burası benim çalışma [yerim ayrımı bence  
7 önemli abi ya
- M:  
8 [evde de oluyo da bi  
9 noktada
- S:  
10 ya-
- M:  
11 yataktan ayrılıyorum kalkıp işe gidiyim hihh  
12 masaya geçeyim
- B:  
13 **hehheh yataktan kalktın, iştesin**
- M:  
14 **aynen(h) (.5) masaya oturunca iştesin**
- Eng:  
S:  
1 and I, home and office-  
2-3 like, I like home and office being two  
different physical places
- M:  
4 yeah
- S:  
5 "this is my relaxing place,  
6 this is my working place" [distinction is  
7 important *abi ya*
- M:  
8-9 [it happens at  
home too, to some extent
- S:  
10 ya-
- M:

11 I'm leaving my bed, let me go to work hihh  
 12 let me sit at the table  
 B:  
 13 **hehheh you wake up, and you are at work**  
 M:  
 14 **yeah(h) (.5) fwhen you sit at the table  
 you are at workf**

There are two contrasting positions in this conversation excerpt: 'working from home' and 'working freelance'. The first speaker, S, is an office worker whereas M works at home office. Within this contrast, S takes an affective stance on the office environment and against working from home in lines 1-7. M shows disalignment with this stance in lines 8-9, saying that the same advantage of working at the office also applies to the home-office environment. In lines 11-12, M starts narrating a simulation of him waking up and deciding to go to work, which is a response to speaker S's stance on home and office being separate places. Then, in line 13, speaker B upgrades this simulation with a sentence containing a simple impersonal pronoun. His answer begins with a chuckle, probably because the idea of bed and table being regarded as distinct places as home and office is funny to him—and to M as well. M continues the jokey tone and adds another sentence with an impersonal pronoun. It appears that the stance in lines 13 and 14, which is aligned with the stance that is started in line 8, is achieved through the use of impersonal second-person pronouns. This is because, by using impersonal pronouns, the speakers are able to portray their personal experiences as generalizable ones. The the cases of 'you' in line 14, for example, do not refer to anyone in that conversation. They represent an imaginary person who works at the home office and experience the working place and relaxing place distinction that is claimed to be unique to office work. By claiming that the experience is not unique to him or B and M, they take a stance for home-office, and they solidify this stance by positioning it as a more

generalizable experience. Of course, the laughter of B and the chuckling tone of M soothes the seriousness of their position, and the conversation quickly switches to another topic without any controversy.

Another example of impersonal-*sen* 'you' is presented in (50). This example includes a more intimate experience of the speaker and therefore the positive affective stance is expected to be a stronger one.

- (50) Context: Speaker T, talks about his changing views on his religiosity to his friend A. Both participants are a little less than close friends.
- T:
- 1 bi de şey vardı böyle dindarken (.)  
2 her şeyin (.) manasız geldiği  
3 bi olay da vardı yan' her şey-  
4 ha şey- profan geliyordu,  
5 o kelime- aradığım kelime o.  
6 yani (.) dünyevi. mesla herhangi bi aşk,  
7 mes'a herhangi bi idolojisi,  
8 herhangi bi arkadaş çevresine üye olmak  
9 (.) orda bi peşin geliştirmek bile  
10 şey geliyordu- manasız geliyordu  
11 çünkü [sürekli-  
A:  
12 [hojam] bunlar a:rette neşimize  
13 yarıycakf=  
T:  
14 =AYNEN, TAM olarak öyle (.)  
15 yani o çok vurgulanıyo yani (.) **sonušta**  
16 **sana sonsuz- sonsuz ömür vağdediyo falan.**  
17 şu an onlar falan mağnallı-  
18 yau bi de ıı- lazım  
19 yani küçük şeylerden zevk alma falan-  
20 o hiç yoktur yani bende yani şeydeyken-  
21 (1) ııığ ilk ha(h)limde(h)yken diyeyim (1)  
22 neyse işte  
Eng:  
T:  
1 and there was this thing when I was  
religious (.)  
2-3 there was a thing where everything looked  
meaningless I mean everything-  
4 ha şey- looked profane,  
5 that word- that's the word I was looking  
for.



6     like (.) earthly. like any kind of  
 7     romance,  
 8     any kind of ideology,  
 9     subscribing to any kind of friend  
 10    environment (.)  
 11    even developing a passion there  
 12    looked şey- looked meaningless  
 13    because [always-  
 A:  
 12-13 [my hodja] fhow are these any good for the  
 afterlife?=  
 T:  
 14                   =EXACTLY, it is DEFINITELY so(.)  
 15    it is emphasized a lot (.) **after all**  
 16    **it promises you eternal life.**  
 17    now those things seem meaningful-  
 18    and also 11- it is necessary  
 19    to enjoy little things and whatnot-  
 20    it was definitely not the case for me I  
 mean when I was in şey-  
 21    (1) 111ğ when I was (hah)in my previous  
 state (1)  
 22    whatever

In this excerpt, the speaker T talks about his transforming identity and its repercussions on his feelings. In his lengthy turn, T talks about how religious worldview caused him to find many ordinary things *profan* ‘profane’ and *manasız* ‘meaningless’. This is a stance against his past religiosity because he positions himself as someone who is harmed by a religious attitude. After this lengthy turn, A jokingly responds with a sentence *hojam bunlar a:rette neyşimize yarıycak*, which can be roughly translated as ‘my hodja how are these any good for the afterlife.’ This is a classical question that generally highly religious people ask in Turkey, which A mimics in a laughing tone to signal that he understands T’s situation. After A’s turn, T immediately agrees with his mimicry with emphasized affirmative response and states that A’s sentence was indeed the usual reaction he got when he was religious. In short, A takes a stance against the religious attitude, A aligns, and T aligns his

response. To strengthen this stance, T inserts a sentence with impersonal-*sen*: *sonušta sana sonsuz ömür vağdediyo* ‘after all it promises you and endless life.’ “It” refers to religion here, and impersonal-*sen* represents a religious person, someone like T in his past. The picture this sentence presents is that, with information from the discourse considered, religion promises some group of people (represented by the pronoun ‘you’) eternal life, and it causes them to find other earthly pleasures such as developing a passion or joining a community profane and meaningless. In other words, the people that ‘you’ represents are victims—victims of religion. They are positioned as a victimized group of people who are robbed of some sort of joy in life because of their religious feelings. With this sentence, affective stance is expected for the people in this target of empathy which is represented by the impersonal-*sen*, and is against religion. In this way, the speaker upgrades and generalizes his already established stance in lines 1-10. To summarize, a positive affective stance towards people robbed of enjoyment by religion is created and maintained by aligned stances of discourse participants and strengthened via an impersonal-*sen*. Impersonal-*sen*, therefore, is used as a tool to take or consolidate a positive affective stance for a stance object which can be in alignment or disalignment with the previous stances in the conversation.

To conclude, impersonal-*sen* represents stance objects in the conversation which the discourse participants tend to view positively—i.e., take the positive affective stance. In the next section, impersonal-*onlar* will be examined in terms of stance and positioning.

### 5.3 Impersonal-*onlar*

Impersonal-*onlar* can be best defined as the polar opposite of impersonal-*sen* in terms of stance. It represents the other in the discourse, usually in a negative, or at least in a non-positive way. Additionally, it is mostly observed in close proximity to impersonal-*sen* in the Turkish data. When it is located nearby an impersonal second-person pronoun, its target of empathy is always positioned on the moral opposite of the impersonal-*sen*'s. The example (51) below has impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar* tokens and demonstrates this opposition.

- (51) Context: There are two participants, T and A. The speaker, T, is an MA student who is in the process of writing a thesis and applying to PhD programs. A is the listener who is a white-collar employee who is unfamiliar with PhD applications. Before, they talked about how PhD in US universities last five years. Here the speaker talks about the advantages of applying to a program in Germany, which has the advantage of lasting shorter—three years. Both participants are close friends.
- T:
- 1      şu an eee111 mesla
  - 2      köln üniverstesinin şeyi açık tamamı
  - 3      köln üniverstesinde bi posyon açık kanka
  - 4      şuan (.) .hhh (.) hhhh. yan' başvursam
  - 5      tezim daha başlamadan bile- ama eee11
  - 6      **sempılvörk istiyolar böyle yirm sayfalık**
  - 7      **bir- (.) tezini aa- tezinin-**
  - 8      **(.)tezn hakkında böyle bi fikir veren yirmi**
  - 9      **sayfalık bir yazı istiyolar**
  - 10      **sss111- sempılvörk deniyo işte ona**
  - 11      **.hhh sempılvörk hazırlıyosun sonra da**
  - 12      **mesla austosta sunacak şekilde inekliyosun**
  - 13      **(.) ki bu zor bişe e- 11111 zor akkaten**
  - 14      **(.) sonra tezini sunuyosun- yada gerçi**
  - 15      **sunmana da gerek yok yaa ee 11**
  - 16      **ordayken de buraya (.) zumla sunabilirsin**
  - 17      ama şey 11 çok zor oluyomuş gerçekten
  - 18      çünkü orda dersler başlıyo ve
  - 19      birden başlıyo böyle .hhh neyse (.)
  - 20      bunu yaparsam- şuan kaç yaşıdayım yirmaltı
  - 21      (.5) 111111 ve üç sene sürüyo ordaki
  - 22      şeeler- piyeçdiler
- A:
- 23      piyeyçdi? (.) azmış lan

Eng:

T:

1 now, eee111, for example,  
2 the University of Cologne has a vacant sey  
3 the University of Cologne has a vacant  
position  
4 now (.) .hhh (.) hhh. like, if I apply  
5 even before my thesis starts- but eee11  
6 **they demand a sample work, twenty page-**  
**long**  
7 **a- (.) your thesis aa- your thesis'**  
8-9 **they want like a twenty-page long paper**  
**that gives an idea about your thesis,**  
10 **sss111- sample work it is called**  
11 **.hhhh you prepare a sample work, and then**  
12 **you cram writing it (=thesis) in order**  
**to present it, for example in august**  
13 **(.) which is a hard thing e- 11111 really**  
**hard**  
14 **(.) and then you present your thesis- or**  
**actually**  
15 **you do not even have to ee 11**  
16 **even if you are there you can present it**  
**to here via zoom**  
17 but sey 11 apparently it is a very hard  
thing to do  
18 because, there, the lessons would start  
and  
19 like they'd start suddenly .hhhh  
whatever(.)  
20 if I do that- how old am I, twenty six  
21 (.5) 111111 and they last three years  
22 the things there- PhDs  
A:  
23 PhD? oh it's short ((...for a PhD))

In this excerpt, the speaker is talking about a hypothetical application procedure where he attempts to apply for a position at the University of Cologne. Then, when he mentions the term 'sample work,' he stops talking about the application process and switches to giving information about the sample work typically expected in academic applications. By deciding to provide information, the speaker presumes that he is more knowledgeable than the hearer with regards to the PhD—or at least, the sample work processes. In other words, T positions himself as the knowledge

authority in this context and also takes a positive epistemic stance for the stance object, which is a PhD application process. The speaker's presumption about the hearer's lack of knowledge is also borne out by the hearer's surprised response in line 23. The sentence that starts in line 6 and is repaired in lines 8-9, *tezinin hakkında böyle fikir veren yirmi sayfalık bir yazı istiyolar* 'they want a twenty-page long paper that gives an idea about your thesis' introduces the structural knowledge part in which the speaker talks about the sample work requirement. This explanatory sentence contains two impersonal pronouns: impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar*. After this, until the hypothetical example ends in line 16, only the impersonal-*sen* is used. The sentence in lines 8-9 is an example of Whitley's (1978) 'procedure' type—an impersonal type that is very rich in epistemic stances.

In lines 4-5, the speaker opts to use first-person: *başvursam tezim daha başlamadan bile* 'if I apply even before my thesis starts.' This is where narration starts about an imaginary application to the University of Cologne. After this sentence, till the A's turn begins, all of the simple pronouns are impersonal. In this impersonal part, the speaker replaces the first person pronoun in the sentence before the impersonal-*sen* talk about what is expected of him. Notice, for example, how 'my thesis' in line 5 turns into 'your thesis' in line 7. The speaker's switch from first-person to impersonal second-person is typical in providing knowledge while still talking about themselves (Bolinger, 1979; O'Connor, 1994; Stirling & Manderson, 2011, among others). As Bolinger (1979) states, "you enables the speaker to generalize and personalize at the same time." In this impersonal part, although the speaker talks about a common situation in a typical application, it is a highly personalized one. The speaker, as a person who plans an academic career, considers it probable that this situation will happen to him.

Impersonal-*onlar*, as indicated above, is positioned as the other which always lacks the empathy that impersonal-*sen* possesses. In 8-9, while the impersonal-*sen* represents the speaker, the impersonal-*onlar* is placed as the people who demand something from the speaker. In the procedure depicted, the people that impersonal-*onlar* represents sanction deadlines and expect documents from the people that impersonal-*sen* represents. “They” are positioned to have authority over “you”. In other words, while impersonal-*sen* is positioned as the protagonist, impersonal-*onlar* is used as an antagonist in the narrated hypothetical scenario of the university application. In the data, this is not a rare phenomenon, but a consistent one. The protagonist-antagonist relationship between the impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar* is regularly encountered in the data. When this contrast is present impersonal-*sen* always takes the positive affirmative stance and impersonal-*onlar* the negative.

The remainder of the impersonal segment, i.e., lines 10-16, gives more detail on the procedure. 11 and 12, i.e., *sempilvörk hazırlıyosun, sonra da mesela austosta şekilde inekliyosun* ‘you prepare a sample work, and then you cram writing the thesis in order to present it, for example, in August’ add more knowledge on the sample work procedure. The speaker starts line 14 to conclude the narration by saying *sonra tezini sunuyosun* ‘then you present your thesis.’ Then, the repair begins with the phrase *yada gerçi...* ‘or actually...’ and lines 15-16 repair 14 and adds more knowledge on the thesis presentation process. The entirety of the impersonal segment is closest to the ‘situational insertion’ type proposed by Laberge and Sankoff (1979), albeit it is not a perfect fit. The unfit stems from the fact that Laberge and Sankoff (1979) formulate the situational insertion as general situations happening to the speaker often. In sentences 6-16 of the excerpt (51), however, the situation is not something that happened to the speaker; but instead, it has a probability of happening

to him. Here the target of empathy is the set of people who apply to a position in a university while writing a thesis. Only the impersonal-*sen* is utilized to call for empathy, while impersonal-*onlar* is used for the other people with whom neither the speaker nor the addressee is supposed to empathize.

Above, we have examined how a speaker imagines a hypothetical situation and how he utilizes different impersonal pronouns to convey contrasting stances and positions. In excerpt (52) below, the speaker talks about a real situation that is very relevant to the speaker and hearer. The hearer is an MA student who lives off his family. The speaker, a person finishing his PhD who has been living away from his family for a long time, comments on the dependency relationship with one's family.

- (52) Context: The speaker here is in the middle of a long narration about one's financial relationship with the family—he is a PhD student in a fully funded program who is financially independent. The hearer is an MA student who is dependent on his family. The following excerpt is cut from a very lengthy turn. Both participants are close friends.
- 1     mühim olan-  
2     mühim olan şu yani tamam mı  
3     (.) ııı nedir onun adı  
4     **(1) aileye bi ihtiyaç ilişkinin kalmaması**  
5     **(.) eğer sen kendini çekip çevirebiliyosan**  
6     **(.) bişey diyemiyolar yan'**  
7     **geliyolar sana bi fiidbek veriyolar**  
8     **diyosun tamam aldım ben bunu**  
9     **yapmaya devam ediyorum ama bişe olmuyo**  
10    **(.) dolaysıyya evet**  
11    **bizde bu burun sokma çabası var ama**  
12    **milletin burnunu ne kadar sokabildiği**  
13    **biraz bizim ne kadarını müsaade ettiimizle**  
14    **ilgili**  
Eng:  
1     what's important is-  
2     what's important is this okay  
3     (.) ııı whatchamacallit  
4     **(1) that you no longer have a dependency**  
5     **relationship to the family**  
6     **(.) if you can look after yourself**  
7     **(.) they can't say anything I mean**  
8     **they'd come and give feedback to you**  
9     **you say okay I take it**

9 I'll do it either way and nothing happens  
 10 (.) so yeah  
 11 we have these nose-dipping<sup>6</sup> attempts but  
 12 to what extend people can nose-dip is  
 13-14 a little related to to what extend we  
 allow it

The speaker here is a Turkish person that just finished his PhD in the United States whereas the hearer is doing his MA in Turkey. This fact is readable from the excerpt since, throughout his example, he positions himself as more knowledgeable. In lines 1-4 he states what is significant in a financial relationship to the family: *mühim olan... aileye bir ihtiyaç ilişkisinin kalmaması* ‘what’s important is... that you no longer have a dependency relationship to the family.’ This is a position of authority—he deems himself capable of talking about what is important when it comes to a person’s financial tie to their family.

The sentence *eğer sen kendini çekip çevirebiliyosan bişey diyemiyolar* ‘If you can look after yourself, they can’t say anything,’ includes both impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar* just like the previous example examined. Here, impersonal-*sen* represents a junior family member who can be the speaker or the hearer of this conversation. Impersonal-*onlar*, on the other hand, represents the family members from whom the junior family member desires to be independent. It is crucial to bear in mind that both participants in this conversation are young students in graduate school. The issue of seeking financial independence is relatable to both participants. In that financial independence struggle, their families naturally stand on the opposite side. Looking at this conflict, it is safe to say that impersonal-*onlar* is used to position the family dependence as harmful and to take a negative affective stance against it. Especially if we examine the sentence “they can’t say anything”, we

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<sup>6</sup> A Turkish idiom for needlessly interfering.



observe it presumes that the family usually would say something—something undesirable, maybe like interfering with personal decisions in life. The speaker finds it important (lines 1-2) to gain financial independence and earn the possibility to ignore their interference (lines 7-9).

In conclusion, impersonal-*onlar* takes up the role of depicting negatively portrayed people. When they are used along with impersonal-*sen*, both pronouns represent groups of people that are in conflict with each other. Regarding the stance-taking framework, we can make a definitive claim that impersonal-*they* represents stance objects against which the discourse participants take negative affective stances. In the next section, the stance and positioning properties of impersonal-*biz* will be investigated.

#### 5.4 Impersonal-*biz*

Notice that the example (52) above also has impersonal-*biz* pronouns. In line 11, *biz* in the sentence *bizde bu burun sokma çabaları var* ‘we have these nose-dipping (=interfering with somebody else’s matters) attempts’ may refer to many things: people in our country, our elders, families, or people in our culture in general. It would be infelicitous if this *biz* ‘we’ strictly referred to the speaker’s own family since the interference of the family is impersonalized in the preceding lines (lines 4-9) as a common situation. It is clear from the narrative that *biz* ‘we’ in the sentence “we have these nose-dipping attempts” does not represent a group of people neither the speaker nor the hearer is supposed to take a positive stance affective since interfering is already established as an undesirable action. Interestingly, however, the following three lines, 12-14, contain the same pronoun, *biz* ‘we’, to refer to a very different set of people—a set of people that probably includes the speaker and the

hearer. In the sentence *milletin burnunu ne kadar sokabildiği biraz bizim ne kadarını müsaade ettiğimizle alakalı* ‘to what extend people can nose-dip a little depends on what extend we allow it’, the impersonal *biz* ‘we’ cannot refer to the same people as in line 11—i.e., it cannot refer to traditional families, elders, people who demand to interfere with our lives and so forth. The word *millet* ‘people’ in these lines refers to those kinds of people who interfere. *biz* ‘we’, on the other hand, refers to people like the hearer and the speaker, people who are victims of nose-dipping and who consider being financially independent of the family. Note that impersonal-*biz* in lines 11 and 12-14 used to represent not only different people but people who are in conflict in this segment: juniors who seek independence and seniors who seek interference. It represented antagonist and protagonist positions of the situation in adjacent lines.

The indecisive state of impersonal-*biz* is observed throughout the data—it can be used to take a positive affective stance and negative affective stance depending on the situation and other impersonal pronouns in the proximity. Unlike impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*they*, which are used unanimously to take one particular polar end of affective stance continuum, impersonal-*biz* shows more variety. Depending on the group of people impersonal-*biz* stands for, the affective stance can be at any point in the spectrum. In the next sections, the stance-taking properties of HOMO-impersonals will be investigated.

### 5.5 Impersonal-*insan*

Impersonal-*sen* is not alone in triggering positive affective stances in Turkish.

Although it is rarer, the HOMO-impersonal-*insan* ‘one, human’ can be used to express positive affective stance-taking as well—probably even to a more substantial degree. The example (53) below demonstrates this type of use.

- (53) Context: U, A, and B are in discourse. U talks about his trip to Germany to learn German.
- U:  
 1 hani almanyaya almanca kursuna [gittim  
 A:  
 2 [çok]  
 3 mantıklı  
 B:  
 4 e öğrendin mi  
 U:  
 5 yani e- bi kur atladım (2.5)  
 6 güzel de oldu,  
 7 yurtdışı deneyimi olunca böyle (.)  
 8 **insanın gözü gönlü açılıyo,**  
 9 **muasır medeniyet görüyorsunuz falan**  
 B:  
 10 ne kadar süre kaldın?  
 U:  
 11 iki ay.  
 Eng:  
 U:  
 1 like I went to Germany for a German  
 [course  
 A:  
 2-3 [that] makes sense  
 B:  
 4 e did you learn  
 U:  
 5 yani e- I progressed a level (2.5)  
 6 it was fine too,  
 7 when it is abroad experience (.)  
 8 **one cheers up,**  
 9 **you see modern civilization and whatnot**  
 B:  
 10 how long did you stay?  
 U:  
 11 for two months.

As it is also pointed out in section 4.4, neither ‘one’ nor ‘a person’ is a good translation for the Turkish HOMO-impersonal-*insan*. This is because *insan* is used to convey much stronger subjectivity than that of *one* and *a person*. It often calls for empathy, almost always utilized to take a positive affective stance for an established stance object. The example above is no exception. In line 5, after responding to B’s

question, U waits for 2.5 seconds and switches to another topic: the benefits of his trip to him. To convey his experience there, he opts to use two impersonal pronouns instead of first-person. When we look at lines 8-9, the impersonal pronouns he uses are impersonal-*insan* and impersonal-*sen*. In line 8, by saying that *insanın gözü gönü açılıyo* ‘one cheers up’, not only does he take a positive stance for his trip, but he also makes that feeling a general one. This is very similar to the impersonal-*sen*’s effect in the previous examples. The next sentence continues the same experience, only replacing impersonal-*insan* with the impersonal-*sen*. Although they are both situational insertion examples, line 9 does not deliver the feeling as much as line 8. This is because, in terms of degree, stance-taking by *insan* is one of the strongest among the impersonal pronouns. Whereas the impersonal-*sen* also makes a generalizable claim, *insan* makes it sound like “this is how a typical person feels or reacts in this situation.”

Impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*insan*, therefore, are quite similar in stance—unanimously being used to express a positive affective stance. Impersonal-*insan* delivers much stronger subjectivity compared to other HOMO-impersonals in other languages such as German *man* or English *one*. In the next section, the other Turkish HOMO-impersonal, *adam* ‘man’, will be examined in terms of stance-taking and positioning.

## 5.6 Impersonal-*adam*

Impersonal-*adam* is a gendered Turkish HOMO-impersonal that represents a nondescript male person in a context usually in a negative fashion. In stance-taking terms, impersonal-*adam* represents a stance object that the discourse participants have or are called to have a negative affective stance against. In terms of positioning,

portraying a specific person in a hypothetical context as bad serves the speaker in positioning the self (or other discourse participants) to morally higher positions. The example (54) below demonstrates how impersonal-*adam* is used to exhibit a negative affective stance and self-positioning.

- (54) Context: A and T, near-close friends, are talking about the Chinese tradition. A is knowledgeable about China as he visited and stayed there for a few years. A does not regard Chinese tradition highly and shared a few stories about it before the following excerpt (the full excerpt will be examined in the next chapter). After A shares a story to justify his view on typical Chinese behavior, T asks whether China also has what he calls *şark kurnazı* ‘oriental dodger’ which is a pejorative word generally used to define Turkish people with superficial morality.
- T:
- 1 olm- çinde-  
2 çinde böyle şark kurnazı denen tipler  
3 var mı kanka heh böle [şey
- A:
- 4 [var] ama  
5 şöyle bi şey var (.5)  
6 **adamin neapmaya çalıştığını anlıyorsun**  
7 **han’ adam yalan söylüyo**  
8 **adamin yalan söylediğini sen biliyorsun**  
9 **senin bildiğini o da biliyo ama**  
10 **onlarn kültürne göre bunu sürdürmen lazım-**  
11 **bu oyunu (.) taağm’ bunu sürdürmezsen**  
12 *novaywangsyenbudongwomncongguo ((chinese))*  
13 falan diye böyle yabancılar bizi anlamıyo  
14 siz çin kültürünü [anlayamazsınız  
15 **çok matah bi şey yapıyolarmış]**
- T:
- 16 [ya bi siktirsin  
17 **gitsinler yeaa** ]=  
18 =gibi falan  
19 böle çin çok derin  
20 **siz anlamıyonuz falan böle çekiyolar**
- Eng:
- T:
- 1 olm- in china-]  
2-3 are there any like so-called *oriental dodgers*<sup>7</sup> in china kanka heh like [şey

<sup>7</sup> A Turkish idiom for a person with an extremely superficial moral character who seemingly aligns themselves with the traditions of that society to gain personal profit.

A:  
4 [there  
are] but  
5 there's something like this (.5)  
6 **you get what the guy is doing**  
7 **like the guy is lying**  
8 **you know that the guy is lying**  
9 **he also knows that you know it but**  
10 **according to their culture you have to**  
**maintain this-**  
11 **this game (.) right, if you do not**  
**maintain this**  
12 *novaywangsyenbudongwomncongguo ((chinese))*  
13 like the foreigners do not understand us  
14 you cannot [understand  
15 **as if they are doing something of worth]**  
T:  
16-17 [ya fuck off yea]=<sup>8</sup>  
A:  
18-20 =they boast  
**it like "China is really deep you are not**  
**understanding it"**

This excerpt contains many impersonal pronouns. Along with impersonal-*adam*, impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar* are also utilized in multiple instances in their expected stances. To fully understand the impersonal-*adam*'s relationship with other impersonal pronouns, it is also required to investigate the other impersonals.

T, here, has a negative epistemic stance toward Chinese culture and A has a positive epistemic stance. This is apparent from the fact that T asks a question and A answers by narrating a hypothetical event. The narrative properties of this excerpt will be examined in the next chapter with the example (58).

The excerpt starts with T's question. He asks if China has any *şark kurnazı*, which has no direct translation to English, but is loosely translated as 'oriental shrewd' or 'oriental dodger'. What he means by this compound is not perfectly clear

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<sup>8</sup> In this sentence, the speaker T, actually uses third-person plural imperative which is represented via the suffixes *-sin* 'third-person imperative' and *-ler* 'plural'. Therefore, impersonal 'they' is actually present in this sentence.

from this excerpt alone. A *şark kurnazı* is typically a demeaning expression in Turkish culture, generally said to virtue-signaling people who appear in accord with ethical values on the surface, but underneath seek personal gain. The next turn gives a little more information about this *şark kurnazı*: after answering positively, speaker A portrays a pretentious person who is received as relatively ordinary within Chinese culture and is represented via impersonal-*adam*, which establishes his negative moral positioning of their culture.

In lines 5-15, speaker A describes and evaluates a hypothetical situation using three different impersonal pronouns: *sen*, *onlar*, and *adam*. Line 6 *adamın neapmaya çalıştığını anlıyorsun* ‘you get what the guy is doing’ starts with placing impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*adam* in this hypothetical scenario. Who *adam* and *sen* represent becomes clear in the following lines. The following lines construct a situation where *adam* lies and *sen* is obliged to be okay with it in that situation even when he or she is aware of the fact that *adam* is not telling the truth. Impersonal-*adam* here answers the *şark kurnazı* ‘oriental dodger’ question T asked in the turn before—implying that there is some certain type of person like a *şark kurnazı* in Chinese culture as well.

More importantly, however, presenting impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*adam* in a hypothetical situation like that presents a very clear moral positioning.

Impersonal-*sen* in this segment is a person who is obliged to obey the necessities of Chinese tradition. In this scene, *adam* is lying, and according to the information A claims in lines 10-12, his demeanor is protected by Chinese tradition. Impersonal-*sen*, on the other hand, represents anybody who happens to undergo such an event unwillingly. According to the speaker, if the protagonist(s) (impersonal-*sen*) do not or cannot accommodate themselves with the performance of the antagonist (impersonal-*adam*), they will be judged by Chinese culture. In other words,

impersonal-*adam* represents more than a single unspecified and negatively viewed person—it represents an entire morality system that is positioned inferior. It naturally follows that impersonal-*sen*, who represents people that are alien to Chinese traditions like the speaker and the hearer here, is morally positioned higher than impersonal-*adam*, and therefore Chinese morality.

Antagonists are also represented via impersonal-*onlar* in this excerpt. The sentence in lines 10-11, *onların kültüre göre sürdürmen lazım bu oyunu* ‘you have to maintain this game according to their culture’ exhibits this involuntary obedience by the protagonist and coercion by the antagonist represented by an impersonal-*onlar*. Here what the speaker calls “their culture” is what oppresses the set of people denoted via the impersonal-*sen*. Impersonal-*onlar* represents the Chinese government, Chinese people who adopt at least some specific aspect of Chinese traditions, or maybe some Chinese people in a specific city called Shenzhen.

In short, impersonal-*sen* is placed morally higher compared to impersonal-*onlar* and impersonal-*adam* which represent a morality system. Impersonal-*sen* takes the positive affective stance as predicted and *onlar* and *adam* take the negative. Hence, by answering a question about whether a culture (Chinese culture) has a particular type of person (oriental dodger), speaker A does much more than share information about a culture he is knowledgeable about. He self-positions as morally superior and backs his claim with a hypothetical scene.

## 5.7 Conclusion

To summarize, Turkish impersonal pronouns present a wide variety of stance-taking and positioning opportunities. Speakers tend to use impersonal pronouns when they want to convey a more common experience than their own, making a more



generalizable claim than personal ones do, while preserving the subjectivity. No matter how generalized they are, none of the impersonal pronouns we have examined so far is completely neutral. It appears that the stances and positions elicited via impersonals are not random.

Data shows that impersonal pronouns imply the speaker's positive or negative feelings towards the group (the target of empathy) that particular pronoun represents. In the stance-taking framework, those groups function as stance objects. Impersonal-*sen* is always used to express positive affective stances while *onlar* generally expresses the opposite. Impersonal-*biz*, on the other hand, is a little more slippery and can possibly be used to take both positive and negative stances. Impersonal pronouns that were grammaticalized from content words, i.e., the HOMO-impersonals, also imply particular stances. Impersonal-*insan*, for instance, is always found to take a positive affective stance on its stance object regardless of its pragmatic type. Impersonal-*adam*, on the other hand, is used particularly in hypothetical scenarios and is always found to represent nondescript individuals that the speaker against whom the speaker takes a negative affective stance.

While taking these stances, the discourse participants may simultaneously position themselves as more knowledgeable, and morally superior. If impersonal pronouns put forward generalizable and non-specific claims, which is usually the case, then the speakers position themselves as knowledgeable in that particular context. Another common positioning with impersonal pronouns is 'morally better'. Impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*insan* represent the morally higher in such positioning whereas *onlar* and *adam* represent the lower. Speakers were also found to represent themselves as victims through the use of impersonal pronouns. If there is a negatively regarded stance object in the discourse, however, such as the ones

represented via impersonal-*onlar* in the data, the speaker can position themselves as harmed or victimized. In such positioning, impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*insan* represent the protagonists, i.e., the character that stands for the values of the speaker. When impersonal-*onlar* and impersonal-*sen* are used together, a protagonist and antagonist positioning dichotomy emerges automatically. In such dichotomy, the set of people represented by impersonal-*sen* is always positioned as protagonists and those represented by impersonal-*onlar* antagonists. The details of this dichotomy will be further explored in Chapter 6 in terms of narrative perspective.



## CHAPTER 6

### IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS IN NARRATIVES

In collecting data, it became clear that impersonal pronouns play significant roles in narratives as well. These roles are also predictable. In terms of their distribution, impersonal pronouns are often observed in the orientation and evaluation parts of the narrative as these parts are rich in stance and positioning. While expressing stances and positions, impersonal pronouns are also used to take sides with the protagonists of the story and position against the antagonists of it. Moreover, impersonal pronouns can construct hypothetical narratives, although their lack of real-world referents hinders them to build personal experience narratives.

#### 6.1 Impersonal pronouns and narrative analysis

Impersonal pronouns can be utilized in specific parts of a narrative. In the data examined here, they are especially used in the evaluation and orientation parts of the narrative structure. While they are used in such parts of the narratives, they can also exhibit their stance-taking and positioning properties as discussed in the chapter before. To exemplify this, the excerpt in (55) will be examined which is the first part of a lengthy exchange that includes several narrative turns.

- (55) Context: Before the following passage T started a topic on a video called “The Myth of Chinese efficiency”. That video, which A advised T to watch, talks about how Chinese efficiency is not as good as advertised to the West. A is knowledgeable about China, had visited China, and can speak Chinese. T, who is near-close friends with A, is not knowledgeable about the culture. A goes on to exemplify his opinion on this “myth” with lengthy narrative segments, including experiences he had in China.

A:

1        şıncındaki yeşil enerji panellerini  
2        anlattım mı sana rüzgar enerjisi şelerini

T:

3 yok anlatmadın (.) [ya da unuttum=  
A:  
4 [şincın şe- ]=şincın  
5 şehri şey honkon sınırında  
6 gongdom eyaletinde böyle saçmasapan  
7 küçük bi yerken seksenlerde  
8 **bunu proje şehir olarak belirli-**  
9 **seçiyolar**  
10 .hhh şuan çinin en haytek yeri gib bi şe  
11 **böle (.) biğ fikrin varsa purojen**  
12 **elektronik alanda oraya gidiosun ve (.)**  
13 dünyadaki elektronik alandaki şelerin  
14 yüzde doksanı faln orda üretiliyo  
15 gibi bi şey duymuştum böyle hani=  
T:  
16 =oha=  
A:  
17 =malzemes  
18 falan da orda üretiliyo yani direk  
19 (.) 11 ne dicektim  
20 ha- ben gitmeden şe okumuştum çine  
21 (.) çayna iz liidingin grin enerji  
22 falan gibisinden bi haber böyle taammı  
23 **böle çe- şincın şeerini bütün sokaklarına**  
24 **rüzgar paneli falan koymuşlar hıhıhı**  
25 böyle rüzgar enerjisiyle orasığ-  
26 şehir kendi elektiriğini karşıllıyomuş  
27 falan hani=  
T:  
28 =oha=  
A:  
29 =şincın gibi bi şehir  
30 kendi elektiriini karşıllıyo falan  
31 vaynasını faln dedim böyle (.)  
32 hani bö- düzgün batı medyasında falan  
33 çıkıyo  
34 ben de inanıyorum böyle şeylere falan (.)  
Eng:  
A:  
1-2 have I told you about the green energy  
panels in Shenzhen, the wind energy things  
T:  
3 no you didn't (.) [or I have forgot=  
A:  
4 [shenzhen şe-  
]=shenzhen

5-7 city şey while it was a silly little city  
 in Hongkong border in Gongdom, in the 80s  
 8 **they designat- elect it as a project city**  
 9 .hhh it's like China's most high-tech  
 place now  
 10-11 **(.) if you have an idea, a project in the**  
**field of electronics you go there**  
 12-14 I heard something like ninety percent of  
 the things in electronics in the world is  
 produced there like=  
 T:  
 15 =oha=<sup>9</sup>  
 16-17 =materials are also  
 produced there  
 18 (.) ıı what was I gonna say  
 19 ha- before I go there, to China, I read şe  
 20-21 (.) a piece of news like "China is leading  
 in green energy"  
 22-23 **they have placed like wind turbines on all**  
**of the streets in Shenzhen**  
 24 like with the wind power it-  
 25-26 the city meets all of its power demand=  
 T:  
 27 =oha=  
 28-30 =a city like Shenzhen supplies its own  
 power, I said like wow (.)  
 31 like it's also covered in proper western  
 media  
 32 and I am believing in this stuff (.)

The excerpt starts with an abstract of the narrative: In lines 1 and 2, the speaker, A, introduces the topic "green energy or wind turbines" for the first time and checks whether the story is already known by the hearer T. In line 3, T responds *yok anlatmadın* 'no you didn't tell', establishing that this will be new information and giving the green light for A to continue. This simply positions A as more knowledgeable since T takes a negative epistemic stance on the issue.

<sup>9</sup> An informal interjection that expresses surprise.

In the following lines, from line 4 until the next turn, speaker A gives a piece of background information on the Chinese city Shenzhen. This information includes the city's location in China, but more importantly Shenzhen's connection to the main topic—that the city is designated as an epicenter of progressive technology and hence an appropriate place for installing green energy. In lines 10-14, the speaker emphasizes the relevance of Shenzhen even more.

Since it establishes and provides information about the place of the events in the next turns, this entire turn (lines 4-32) is called an “orientation” in narrative analysis. Orientation is the narrative piece where the speaker gives the necessary information about the places, people and other background information that take part in the narrative. One of the interesting aspects of this orientation part is that it includes two impersonal pronouns: impersonal-*sen* and *onlar*. Line 8 has an impersonal-*onlar*: *bunu proje şehir olarak seçiyolar* ‘They elect it (=Shenzhen) as a project city.’ Impersonal-*onlar*, here, probably represents the Chinese government or people in China, who are decision-makers. Although one may argue that this *onlar* is, in fact, personal. However, the exact identity of this set of people is irrelevant because if we replace impersonal-*onlar* with impersonal passive the entire orientation segment would still be felicitous: *bu proje olarak seçiliyo* ‘it is elected as project city.’

In lines 8-14, there is one impersonal-*onlar* and one impersonal-*sen*. Although a clear reason to assume any antagonist and protagonist is absent till line 8, the Chinese attitude will be positioned as an antagonist in the unfolding of the events. Furthermore, the entire Shenzhen example is being given to support the claim of “The Myth of Chinese Efficiency” video which criticizes the advertised Chinese

efficiency. Therefore, it can be claimed that here impersonal-*onlar* represents the Chinese authorities and they are the antagonists of the narrative.

When it comes to the impersonal-*sen* in lines 10-11, the purpose of the use is a bit less clear. The impersonal-*sen* in the sentence *biğ fikrin varsa purojen elektronik alanda oraya gidiosun* ‘if you got an idea, a project in the field of electronics you go there (=Shenzhen)’ represents a set of people who potentially have projects in the field of electronics. Since neither the speaker nor the hearer is an electronic expert, let aside a Chinese one, it is difficult or even impossible to say that this impersonal-*sen* represents a group that involves the speaker and the addressee. However, as the story continues, there is a striking contrast between two moral values that will be always present in the story: the contrast between *authentic* versus *appearance-based* moral behavior. A person with a project in the electronics field is probably positioned to belong to the authentic value rather than the appearance-based, morally superior one in speaker A’s presentation. The orientation segment here, therefore, contains clues that foreshadow the positioning of the actors in the story, the liked and the disliked.

The orientation part of A’s narrative continues after T’s expression. T’s reaction *oha* in line 15 is a highly informal way of expressing surprise. A immediately continues his turn saying *malzemes falan da orda üretiliyo yani direk* ‘materials are also produced there’, therefore adding more information about Shenzhen. Then, with line 18 *u ne dicektim* ‘ıı what was I gonna say,’ the orientation part continues with the news A heard about Shenzhen. This part contains a statement with impersonal-*onlar*: *şincın şeerini bütün sokaklarına rüzgar paneli falan koymuşlar* ‘they have placed wind turbines on all of the streets in Shenzhen.’ One may argue that this third-person plural is in fact personal. The identity of reference of

impersonal-*onlar* here is negligible to the point that the sentence can easily be reconstructed by an impersonal passive and it would not alter the flow of the conversation in a significant way. Its passive version would be *şincin şehrinin bütün sokaklarına rüzgar paneli koyulmuş* ‘The wind turbines are placed on all of the streets in Shenzhen.’ This sentence is identical to its impersonal-*onlar* equivalent, except it does not take an affective stance as its impersonal-*onlar* equivalent does—the stance of antipathy. As with the lines above, impersonal-*onlar* is used to represent the negatively regarded target which can be interpreted as the Chinese government, officials of that province, or people who thought putting such wind turbines is a good idea.

The orientation section provides the necessary context about Shenzhen. While doing so, the speaker uses impersonal pronouns in several instances to establish his stance which will also be relevant in the rest of his narrative. As per Labov’s classical template, complicating action part of the narrative begins after the orientation part, as given in (56).

- (56) A:  
 33 çine gittim=  
 T:  
 34 =hee  
 A:  
 35 çine gittim (.) şincına gittim işte  
 36 heh arka(hah)daş yok la pervane falan  
 37 yok öle bişey falan dedi taammı  
 38 hiçbi yerde görmedim dedi (.) geh- heh-  
 39 şincınlı bi çocuğa falan sordum böyle  
 40 (.) normalde çinliler bu konuda konuşmaz  
 41 **ya sana çok güvenmesi lazım ya da**  
 42 **çok böyle içmesi falan lazım [hıhıhıh]**  
 T:  
 43 [heh HADİ YA?]  
 A:  
 44 şey dedi böyle (.)  
 45 yaağ onu zamanında koydular  
 46 batılılar gelecek falan gibisinden





about expected Chinese behavior, instead of continuing the event sequence commenced in line 33. The reason for A's providing such information is to establish the legitimacy of his claim. By saying that the Chinese people would talk on this topic only when they trust the person they talk to, he claims his source is close to him, and therefore what he says is presumably the truth. This is significant, especially because what he heard from his source is diametrically opposite to the information shared on western and Chinese media.

The impersonal-*sen* in *sana çok güvenmesi lazım* 'they must trust you a lot' represents a type of person whom a Chinese person must trust a lot before talking about a sensitive topic. This set of people that this impersonal-*sen* represents includes the speaker, and arguably the hearer. This type of you in between the stories is similar to Laberge and Sankoff's (1979) situational insertion, where the speaker generalizes his own experience, "phrasing it as something that could or would be anybody's" (Laberge & Sankoff, 1979, p. 429). By using the impersonal-*sen* to talk about his own experience, the speaker establishes that this mistrust by Chinese people is not really about the speaker, but about a much wider class of people—non-Chinese people which include the speaker. However, as a non-Chinese person, he manages to earn that information which means that he was eligible for their trust which they rarely do according to the speaker's claim. Hence, by inserting this orientation segment, the speaker solidifies the trustworthiness of his source, taking a positive epistemic stance and positioning himself as trustable on the matter.

After this insertion, the resolution part (lines 44-50) concludes the story with the reported speech from his Chinese friend which further cements the speaker's claim about the main reason for the wind turbine setup. The sentence *yan' çin bu hakkaten* 'this is what China is really' in line 50 is the coda of this narrative. With

this sentence, speaker A proposes that the wind turbine example is not exceptional, but a widely observed behavior in China.

This narrative ends with line 50, and the speaker starts to share information and express his ideas about Chinese attitude, as given in (57).

- (57) A:  
50 heh çocuk (.) yan' çin bu hakkaten  
51 yani çin- (.) feys dedikleri bi olay var  
52 miyenzı (.) veya miyanmu falan böyle (.)  
53 geymiyenzı messea yüz vermek tamam mı (.)  
54 biz seninle aynı guvanşı içindeyse  
55 aynı netvörkün insanıysak  
56 mesela sen bi ortamda sallamaya başladın  
57 tamam mı ben şuranın siyosuyum falan filan  
58 ((lag interference)) ben de  
59 seni böyle övüyorum tamam mı  
60 aa aynen öyle- ben de senin için  
61 yalan söylemek zorundayım orda yani tağam'  
62 senin imajını şe böyle- zaten herkes  
63 birbirne bakarken birbirnin  
64 yalan söylediği varsayımı üzerine konuşuyo  
65 orda ve biğaraya gelip ziyafet şeapıp  
66 sörkılcörking havasında birbirlerini övüp  
67 duruyolar falan hahah (0.5)  
68 [yani çindeki iş yapmanın modu bu yani- (
- Eng:  
A:  
50 heh the kid (.) I mean this is what China  
is really  
51 I mean China- (.) they have a notion  
called face  
52 miyenzı (.) or miyanmu (.)  
53 geymiyenzı, for example, is to give face,  
right<sup>10</sup>  
54 if we are at the same guanxi with you  
55 if we are the people of the same network  
56 let's say, you started to fabricate things  
in an occasion  
57 right, like I am CEO of that place etc  
58 ((lag interference)) I too  
59 boast you, right

<sup>10</sup> To give face is the literal translation of that Chinese expression. The meaning of this expression is unpacked by the speaker in the following lines.

60-61 "oh he is right"- I must lie for you too  
there  
62-64 your image- everybody there already talks  
on the presumption that others are lying  
65-67 and they would come together, throw a  
banquet, like circle-jerking they  
constantly praise each other  
68 [like this is the way of making business  
in China- ()

Here, he further elaborates on the reasoning behind the behavior he narrated by introducing Chinese terms like *miyenzi*. The part between the lines 54-62 may appear to contain impersonal-*sen* and *biz* since the speaker narrates a hypothetical scene. It also contains the first-person singular pronoun which is not in the Turkish impersonal pronoun inventory. Lines 54-62 construct a hypothetical situation in which the speaker and the hearer are placed. This passage contains no impersonal pronouns although the speaker and the hearer are placed into hypothetical roles as examined in previous examples. Here, 'you' refers to the hearer, 'I' refers to the speaker, and 'we' refers to the hearer plus the speaker. That is, the references are definite and specific. They are merely put in a hypothetical scenario.

While A is finalizing this section, T introduces another topic with his question as illustrated in (58).

- (58) A:  
68 [yani çindeki iş yapmanın modu bu  
69 yani- ()  
T:  
70 [olm- çinde-]  
71 çinde böyle şark kurnazı denen tipler  
72 var mı kanka heh böyle [şey  
A:  
73 [var] ama  
74 **şöyle bi şey var (.5)**  
75 **adamın neapmaya çalıştığını anlıyorsun**  
76 **han' adam yalan söylüyo**  
77 **adamın yalan söylediğini sen biliyorsun**  
78 **senin bildiğini o da biliyo ama**

79 onlarn k lt rne g re bunu s rd rmen lazım-  
 80 bu oyunu (.) taağm' bunu s rd rmezsen  
 81 *novaywangsyenbudongwomncongguo* ((chinese))  
 82 falan diye b yle yabancılar bizi anlamıyo  
 83 siz  in k lt r n  [anlayamazsınız  
 84  ok matah bi  ey yapıyolarmı ]  
 T:  
 85 [ya bi siktirsin  
 86 gitsinler yeaa ]=  
 A:  
 87 =gibi falan  
 88 b le  in  ok derin  
 89 siz anlamıyonuz falan b le  ekiyolar  
 Eng:  
 A:  
 68-69 [like this is the way of making business  
 China- ()  
 T:  
 70 [olm in china-]  
 71-72 are there any like so-called *oriental*  
*dodgers* in china kanka heh like [ ey  
 A:  
 73 [there  
 are] but  
 74 there's something like this (.5)  
 75 you get what the guy is doing  
 76 like the guy is lying  
 77 you know that the guy is lying  
 78 he also knows that you know it but  
 79 according to their culture you have to  
 maintain this-  
 80 this game (.) right, if you do not  
 maintain this  
 81 *novaywangsyenbudongwomncongguo* ((chinese))  
 82 like the foreigners do not understand us  
 83 you cannot [understand  
 84 as if they are doing something of worth]  
 T:  
 85-86 [ya fuck off yeaa]=  
 A:  
 87-89 =they boast  
 it like "China is really deep you are not  
 understanding it"

In section 5.6, the stance-taking and positioning properties of impersonal pronouns have already been examined. Here, the sole focus will be on how these pronouns are used to keep the narrative going.

Recall that the topic T introduced, *şark kurnazı* ‘oriental dodger’ is a pejorative expression towards people who are considered to have a very superficial morality. If we describe an oriental dodger like this, the question and the answer align with the main topic of the wind-turbine narrative: the appearance-based aspect of a moral system. In the previous narrative, the speaker utilized the impersonal pronouns, mainly impersonal-*sen* and *onlar*, to position the discourse participants away and above what he considered appearance-based behavior. Impersonal-*sen* represented the discourse participants and positioned them on a morally superior side—superior compared to the stance object represented by impersonal-*onlar* and impersonal-*adam*.

In terms of narrative analysis, it is safe to say that this story in lines 74-89 does not narrate personal experiences in the past, i.e., it is not a PEN. It is a hypothetical narrative in which an imaginary situation is recounted and regular narrative parts like complicating action and resolution still exist. The abstract of this hypothetical narrative is basically A’s answer to T’s question of whether China has any so-called ‘oriental dodger’: *var* ‘there is.’ The next sentence *ama şöyle bi şey var* ‘but there is something like this’ signals the initiation of the hypothetical sequence of events. Lines 74-79 contain the complicating action part of this narration: the guy lies, and the protagonist necessarily complies. Then the resolution stage is presented in which a case where the protagonist’s non-compliance to this tradition is imagined via the sentence: *eğer bunu yapmazsan* ‘if you don’t do this.’ Therefore, the resolution roughly corresponds to lines 80-83. Lines 84-90 are a collaborative

evaluation part in which both the speaker and the hearer take turns to position themselves against the antagonists, the people that impersonal-*onlar* and HOMO-impersonal *adam* represent.

While speaker A's example finishes here, the hearer T takes the turn and gives an example from Iran, which is given in (59).

- (59) T:  
90 ya olm iranda şey varmış ya- (.)  
91 iranda şey varmış kanka hehe (.)  
92 duymuş muydun bilmiyorum (.)  
93 **mesla taksidesin kanka (.)**  
94 **para ödeyecen (1) eeıı işť parayı veriyon**  
95 **(.) şe diyomuş-**  
96 **yook önemli deil diyomuş taksici**  
97 **sonra ısrar etmen gerekiyomuş al al diye**  
98 **ıhhıhhh hıhıhı ve bunu**  
99 **her severinde yapman gerekiyomuş**  
100 **ya mesela hehheh bakkaldan bi şey aldın**  
101 **falán (.) yo önemli deil diyolarmış**  
102 **ilk başta sonra ısrar ediyomuşsun**  
103 **al al falán diye hihhahahah**  
A:  
104 ne gereğı var yeeaaa uffff  
105 **zaman kaybediyosun yan'**  
106 **normal hayatında [ ( )**  
T:  
107 [olm çok salakça yeaa]  
Eng:  
T:  
90 ya olm iran has that şey - (.)  
91 iran has that şey kanka hehe (.)  
92 I don't know if you heard about it (.)  
93 **let's say you're in a taxi kanka (.)**  
94 **you're about to pay (1) eeııı then you**  
95 **pass the money**  
96 **(.) he says şe-**  
97 **noo it's not important says the taxi**  
98 **driver**  
99 **then you had to insist on saying like**  
100 **"take it, take it"**  
101 **ıhhıhhh hıhıhı and you have to do this**  
102 **every time**  
103 **ya let's say you bought something from the**  
104 **grocery**





speaker, T, exemplifies these antagonists with a taxi driver (line 96) and staff at a grocery store (lines 100-101). Line 96 is devoid of any impersonal pronoun and the antagonist (taxi driver) is referred to via a personal third-person simple pronoun. In line 101, *yo önemli deil diyolarmış* ‘they say no it’s not important,’ the antagonist is referred to via a third-person plural pronoun—an example of impersonal-*onlar*. They can be viewed as antagonists precisely because the speaker believes they exemplify a tradition that is found to be stupid (line 107) and deserving of laughter by the speaker (lines 98 and 103); and unworthy of bothering by the addressee (lines 104-106). In short, as in the case of previous narratives, impersonal-*onlar* is used to take a negative affective stance and position the members of the tradition on the opposite side of the protagonists.

Impersonal-*sen*, on the other hand, can be interpreted as a person who (probably unwillingly) undergoes this whole tradition, maybe like a tourist rather than an ordinary citizen of Iran. As expected, T’s use of the impersonal-*sen* in the bold parts functions as a positive stance-taking tool, while positioning the set of people it represents as the protagonists of the story at the same time. In the next turn, the addressee, A, uses impersonal-*sen* to react to the tradition that is found absurd. In lines 104-106, he uses impersonal-*sen* to position the protagonist as a victim of this tradition. To A, the tradition causes a person (represented via impersonal-*sen*) to lose his time in their ordinary lives: *zaman kaybediyosun yan’ normal hayatında* ‘so you lose time in your ordinary life.’ T’s and A’s stances are also almost totally aligned: A’s impersonal-*sen* refers to the same non-specific set of people as T’s impersonal-*sen*: people who are alien to but happened to be exposed to this particular tradition. A’s impersonal-*sen*, however, is an upgraded version of T’s since it is affected

negatively by this tradition whereas T's impersonal-*sen* simply undergoes the tradition.

This narrative is a hypothetical one like the one in (58). The hypothetical aspect is even more pronounced here because of the evidentiality, represented by the suffix *-mİş* throughout the excerpt. Lines 93-99 is an imagined scene in a taxi where the protagonist, whoever the impersonal-*sen* might represent, enters a dialogue with an Iranian taxi driver where the protagonist is expected to insist to pay for the service used. The sentence *mesela taksidesin kanka, para ödeyecen* 'let's say you're in a taxi kanka and you are about to pay' sets the stage and can, therefore, be the orientation part of this narrative. Complicating action is where the protagonist passes the money and the taxi driver initially refuses. The resolution is the part where the protagonist of the scene is expected to insist. Finally, the coda is the sentence *ve bunu her seferinde yapman gerekiyomuş* 'and you have to do this every time.' After the narrative ends here, the speaker T gives a grocery store version of this example in lines 100-103 with the same structure and theme. In lines 104-107 both speakers evaluate the scene in collaboration. In this evaluation part, after finding this tradition unnecessary, A uses an impersonal-*sen*: *zaman kaybediyosun yan' normal hayatında* 'so you lose time in your ordinary life.' Again, the impersonal-*sen* is used to convey a positive affective stance to the people who are also positioned as protagonists in this scene and the ones we covered in this section.

Overall, the purpose of this hypothetical narrative is to further exemplify the authentic versus appearance-based moral dichotomy that was ever-present in the Chinese wind turbines story. The stance-taking function of impersonal-*sen* and *onlar* are also parallel to those in the narrative of A. Giving a similar example from a different country also serves to universalize the claim, as opposed to being specific to

The conversation above was rich in terms of positioning as it included a lot of judgmental statements towards stance objects which were pieces of Chinese and Iranian cultures. However, not all narratives contain such strong affective stances and clear-cut moral positions. Even when stances and positions are not so strong, the protagonist and antagonist dichotomy persists if impersonal-*sen* and they coexists in a narrative. The example (60) below is a hypothetical narrative from a different conversation.

101

11 **belli bi kismına ceza [verebiliyolar orası**  
 12 **küfrettii zaman**  
 S:  
 13 [yok artık ]  
 Eng:  
 A:  
 1 galatasaray had match yaa, this week  
 H:  
 2 he said I have been penalized?  
 A:  
 3 *abi* () was penalized to he ()other  
 [people's şey()  
 S:  
 4-5 [what ban?]  
 A:  
 6 [swearing.  
 H:  
 7 **[kanki] when you swear a lot in stands (.)**  
 8 **to something [they can penalize-**  
 A:  
 9 **[they close the stands]=**  
 H:  
 10-12 **=they**  
**can [penalize a particular part of the**  
**stands when that part swears**  
 S:  
 13 [no way ]

This impersonal part that was marked in bold in this excerpt is an example of a small story by Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008), which also includes hypothetical narratives along with personal experience narratives. This mini-narrative has a complicating action which is swearing, and a resolution which is punishment. In terms of stance, the first thing we notice in this small story is that it is told to provide information to speaker S. Hence the first stance we observe is the negative epistemic stance of S in lines 4-5. H immediately picks up on this, positioning himself as more knowledgeable on the matter, and responds in lines 7-12 with A's supporting insertion in between. As for the affective stance, the data provides somewhat weaker stances compared to other narratives we have examined. Impersonal-*sen* here does not call for empathy, and neither is impersonal-*onlar* positioned very negatively.

However, if we look at complicating action and resolution parts individually, the dichotomy of protagonist and antagonist becomes clearer. In the complication action, impersonal-*sen* swears. In the resolution, impersonal-*onlar* punishes. Considering the fact that A and H insert this narrative after mentioning their friend being banned, the positive affective stance that impersonal-*sen* triggers are still arguably there. If that is so, the ones that penalize (i.e., impersonal-*onlar*) can be stated as antagonists of this small story.

The indecisive nature of impersonal-*biz* has already been discussed in the chapter 5, and will not be further investigated here. For the purposes of this section, it is sufficient to point out that impersonal-*biz* can be used in evaluating the narrative. The data does not contain any instance where impersonal-*biz* is used in an orientation part, or any hypothetical narrative constructed thoroughly via *biz*. The example (52) we have tackled in the previous section also contained a narrative with evaluation by impersonal-*biz*. The example (61) below illustrates another instance where evaluative impersonal-*biz* is used.

- (61) Context: The speaker here takes a narrative turn to give an example of a virtue-signaling behavior of animal right activists. A and T are near-close friends.

A:

1 kaplumbağa çıkıyo yumurtadan  
2 kaplumbağayı eline alıyo (.) götürüyo  
3 suyun içine bırakıyo. bunu yapıyolar[hani

T:

4 [hmm

A:

5 bi kere o kuş neyle beslencek o zaman hani  
6 kuşun sen yavrularını düşünmüyorsun taammı  
7 kaplumbağanın yavrularını düşünüyosun hani  
8 bunu geçtim de şey olayı var ihhihih  
9 adam bi açıklama yapmış şey diye (.)  
10 ııığm (.) siz bunları böyle yapıyorsunuz da  
11 hani hayvan orda mücadele ederken sünrürken  
12 onun yumurtasından gelen bi katman var  
13 vücudunda o sıyrılıp düşmesi lazım

14 siz böyle yapınca o katman düşmeden  
15 suya ulaşıyo (.) onun kokusunu  
16 balıklar alıyo (.) onların hepsini  
17 balıklar yedi bitirdi diyo heheh  
T:  
18 hahaha  
A:  
19 hiçbi kamplumbağa hayatta kalmadı  
20 sizin yü(h)zü(h)nüzden(h)  
T:  
21 ihhahahahah  
A:  
22 **ve bunları tamamen hayatımda bi şeapıyım**  
23 **iyi hissediyim mesela atıyorum**  
24 **(.) bi dava böyle hayvan sevgisi falan**  
25 **bunun üzerinden hayvan sever olıyım**  
26 **hayvan sevmeyenler çok kötü falan**  
27 **derdi insan dövmek, parmak sallamak**  
28 **falan olan şeylere dönüşüyoruz hepimiz**  
29 **bu öyle şey- saçma süreçlerde**

Eng:

A:  
1 turtle leaves the water  
2 guy picks it up (.) takes it and  
3 puts it in the water. they do this [like

T:  
4 [hmm

A:  
5 for one thing, what will the bird feed on  
6 you don't think nestling of the bird  
7 but think of the cubs of turtle like  
8 there was this şey ihhihih  
9 a guy made an explanation saying (.)  
10 ıııııığm (.) you guys are doing this but  
11 like while the animal is struggling there  
12 it has a layer coming from its egg  
13 in its body, it has to come off and fall  
14 when you do like this without it falling  
off  
15 it arrives at the water (.) the fish  
smells  
16 the scent (.) and they are all  
17 eaten by the fish, he says heheh

T:  
18 hahaha

A:  
19-20 no tortoise survived because(h) of(h)  
you(h)

T:  
 21     ihhahahahah  
 A:  
 22-29   **and we all turn into things in these  
           nonsensical times whose main goal is to  
           beat people, to intimidate to feel good,  
           find a cause like love for animals, being  
           an animal lover to say those who don't  
           love animals are evil**

In this narrative, speaker A narrates the behavior of animal lover activists who return struggling ocean turtles to the sea. This complication action part is then followed by a brief evaluation segment where the speaker makes fun of this practice, saying that this supposed favor ignores the bird cubs. After this insertion, the resolution part follows in which speaker A cites a guy responding to this initially well-intended behavior who claims that they actually cause more harm than good by making turtles easy prey for the carnivore fish. Throughout these parts, hearer T accompanies the laughter of speaker A, aligning with A's negative stance that positions this activist behavior as absurd and inconsistent. By making fun of this inconsistency together, the speaker and hearer also position themselves as morally better, at least than those kinds of activists.

In the evaluation of this behavior (lines 22-29), the speaker uses an impersonal-*biz* to depict people who lack moral integrity in what he calls "these nonsensical times." The set of people represented by impersonal-*biz* is positioned by speaker A as insincere in their activist goals as they choose activism only to mask their real intentions which are actually not benevolent. Mentioning an external factor like "the non-sensical times", however, alleviates some moral burden from such individuals who are represented negatively by impersonal-*biz*, tuning down the weight of criticism although his overall affective stance is still negative. The use of impersonal-*biz* rather than impersonal-*onlar* is also interesting since it signifies that

the speaker, and possibly the hearer, is also not exempted from such probability of moral superficiality. In other words, it bears an overwhelming negative affective stance along with, paradoxically, a slightly positive one.

In the previous chapter, it was shown that HOMO-impersonal *insan* ‘one, human’ can be used to convey positive affective stance-taking as well. This is also visible in some narratives despite being much rarer. The bold impersonal part in the example (62) below is the evaluation part of the narrative in which impersonal-*insan* is used to take a strong positive affective stance.

- (62) Context: The speaker takes a lengthy turn to share his opinion about how academia may lead to a good life. This excerpt is from the same as the dialogue in (52) and speaker is the same as well. That is, the speaker is a PhD graduate and hearer is an MA student who thinks about starting a PhD.
- 1 doktoraya gitmesek napcaz mes’a
  - 2 elimizdeki digrilerle türkiyede
  - 3 para kazanmaya çalışsak napcaz yani
  - 4 sen en iyi ihtimal üniversteye girersin
  - 5 argör olursun yedi bin faln alırsın
  - 6 taam doktora için o da çok iyi bişey (.)
  - 7 ordan çıktığında işte yine
  - 8 iyi ihtimal yardımcı doçent olursun
  - 9 yine yedi sekiz arası alırsın ama
  - 10 doktoradan hemen sonra
  - 11 ve- türkiye doktorasından hemen sonra
  - 12 bi yere a- yardımcı doçent
  - 13 gidebildiğine göre muhtemelen
  - 14 bi anadolu üniverstesinde olursun yani (.)
  - 15 **ha insanın kendine sorması lazım yan’**
  - 16 **bu hayat benim için yeter mi**
  - 17 **tatmin eder mi-** ne biliyim
  - 18 karamanoğlu memet beyde kadro bulup gitsem
  - 19 orda sekiz bin liramı alsam ders versem
  - 20 otursam bu benim için yeterli mi falan
- Eng:
- 1 what would we even do if we do not go to a PhD program like
  - 2-3 what would we do if try to earn money in Turkey with the degrees we have
  - 4 in the best case you go in university
  - 5 become an RA earn like seven thousand ((liras))



6      okay it is very good for PhD (.)  
 7      when you leave there  
 8      you become an associate professor  
 9      you earn between seven and eight  
       ((thousand liras)) but  
 10     immediately after the PhD  
 11     and- immediately after PhD in Turkey  
 12-14 you can probably teach in an Anatolian  
       University since you can be associate  
       professor ((at that point))  
 15     **ha one/a person must ask himself like**  
 16     **is this life enough for me**  
 17     **is this satisfying-** I dunno  
 18     if I find a position in Karamanoğlu Mehmet  
       Bey ((University))  
 19     earn eight thousand ((a month)) to teach  
 20     is this enough for me

The speaker constructs a hypothetical narrative with real simple pronouns in lines 4-14, referring to the addressee and imagining him in a possible future academic career. This career the speaker portrays is rather bland according to him as he questions the satisfaction of such a life in the evaluation section in lines 15-20. The advising tone of the excerpt suggests that the speaker positions himself as knowledgeable, and hearer as worthy of advice since he regards him as a PhD candidate. He also regards the hearer as a *good* PhD candidate as well—so much so that he thinks doing a PhD in an ordinary Anatolian university would be unsatisfactory. In lines 15-17 in the evaluation part, not only does he judge the hypothetical position in an Anatolian university (a euphemism for the universities in the countryside), he judges with an impersonal, generalizing his claim. By saying *insanın kendine sorması lazım bu hayat benim için yeter mi* ‘one must ask himself if such a life is enough,’ the speaker simultaneously expresses a very negative affective stance against such academic position as it is judged to be insufficient and a very positive stance towards the set of people that *insan* represents since they deserve a satisfying life.

## 6.2 Conclusion

In this chapter, two claims have been demonstrated as to how Turkish impersonal pronouns can be used in narratives. The first claim is impersonal pronouns can be characters in narratives. Since impersonal pronouns lack specific real-world referents, these narratives are generally hypothetical, not necessarily delivering real personal experiences. Impersonal pronouns are only observed in the orientation and evaluation parts of personal experience narratives, where the narrator interprets or gives information about the events rather than telling the events themselves.

This brings us to the second claim, which is that all Turkish impersonal pronouns can be utilized in a narrative to express stance-taking and positioning. Because orientation and evaluation parts of narratives are where most stance-taking and positioning usually take place, these parts are rich in impersonals. Moreover, stances enacted through most impersonal pronouns exhibit consistency. Impersonal-*sen*, for example, is consistently used by speakers to take a positive affective stance, whereas impersonal-*onlar* is utilized for negative affective stance-taking, especially when they are in close proximity of an impersonal-*sen*. When they are in narratives positioning also becomes more or less predictable. If impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar* occur along with each other in a narrative, the pronoun *sen* gets positioned as protagonists of the story and *onlar* antagonists. Other positions such as knowledgeability, moral superiority, and victimhood, however, are much more context-dependent. The last simple impersonal pronoun, impersonal-*biz*, is also visible in the evaluation parts. Unlike impersonal-*sen* and *onlar*, impersonal-*biz* is never encountered in the orientation parts. In evaluation, impersonal-*biz* can serve for both positive and negative stance-taking, sometimes even simultaneously so. This makes this simple pronoun the most unstable Turkish impersonal. Apart from that,

impersonal-*biz* is not observed to construct hypothetical narratives in the data.

However, this possibility should not be completely ruled out.

HOMO-impersonals, which occur much more seldom than simple impersonals, are also observed in narratives, having stance-taking and positioning properties similar to those of simple impersonal pronouns. *insan* ‘one/a person’ is generally used to take positive stances, probably stronger ones compared to impersonal-*sen*. Impersonal-*insan*, like impersonal-*biz*, is also only found in evaluation parts. *adam* ‘man’ is the rarest impersonal in Turkish and is used to represent a person with his own set of interests, often as an antagonist in narratives.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Impersonal pronouns are tools to convey generalizable claims without losing their subjectivity. The literature approached their properties from many angles. They are tackled morphologically, semantically, pragmatically, interactionally and sociolinguistically. This thesis provided a pragmatic and interactional analysis of Turkish impersonal pronouns, investigating how contexts, the identity of speakers, their self-positionings, and stances affect and are affected by the use of impersonals.

There are six Turkish impersonal pronouns. Four of them are simple personal pronouns used in an impersonal way: *sen* ‘you (sing)’, *siz* ‘you (pl or formal)’, *biz* ‘we’, *onlar* ‘they’. There is also another category of pronouns that Egerland (2003) calls HOMO-impersonals. They are content words that are grammaticalized into pronouns. In Turkish, there are two HOMO-impersonal pronouns: *insan* ‘one/a person’ and *adam* ‘a guy’.

According to the data, their frequency is significantly disproportionate. Whereas simple impersonal pronouns are pretty much found in all recordings, the HOMO-impersonals were much scarcer (550 simple pronoun tokens versus 31 HOMO-impersonal tokens). The overwhelming majority of the impersonal pronouns in the data were impersonal-*sen* (398 tokens), scoring higher than all other impersonals combined. Impersonal-*sen* is followed by *onlar* (77) and *biz* (75).

In what follows, section 7.1 summarizes the findings based on all three frameworks used in this thesis: stance-taking, positioning, and narrative analysis. Section 7.2 comments on the limitations of the thesis and ideas for further research.

## 7.1 Findings

Early literature proposed (Laberge & Sankoff, 1979; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990) three main impersonal types that were influential for later research. These are situational insertion and formulation of morals or truisms for impersonal ‘you’ and impersonal ‘one’; and life drama for impersonal ‘you’ only. The data collected included examples from all three types. The only difference is that impersonal ‘one’ in Turkish is translated as *insan* ‘human’ (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005), which creates problems. This is because impersonal-*insan* conveys much more subjectivity than its European counterparts such as English *one*, French *on*, or German *man*. This restricts its usage in Turkish to much specific—i.e., among close individuals in informal settings. That being said, it is still used in situational insertion and morals and truism formulation contexts, which supports the established literature on impersonal ‘one’.

Impersonal-*onlar* is differentiated from impersonal-*sen* in that impersonal-*onlar* lacks the empathy effect that impersonal-*sen* has (Malamud, 2012). This is very widely and consistently observed in the data as well. Impersonal-*onlar* is used to represent the unspecific “other” in many contexts, usually in a negative fashion.

Impersonal-*biz* presents a less coherent picture since it can be used for a number of reasons that include both empathy and antipathy. Since very little literature investigated impersonal ‘we’ thus far, there is no significant research with which I can compare this finding.

There are two other impersonals in Turkish that are lexical items but act as impersonal pronouns in a sentence. These are *insan* ‘human’ and *adam* ‘man’ and are referred to as HOMO-impersonals in this thesis. Although these are encountered considerably less compared to simple personal pronouns, they also exhibit similar effects in the conversation. *adam* is generally used in narratives to portray an

antagonist. *insan* acts more or less as the English impersonal ‘one’. However, as opposed to ‘one’ *insan* delivers a much stronger subjectivity, usually indicating a strong positive affective stance. In other words, the speaker often uses this pronoun if he or she really feels for the group of people that *insan* is supposed to represent. *adam* brings about an opposite effect, representing an undesirable person in a scenario.

#### 7.1.1 Stance-taking and positioning

Impersonal pronouns deliver a certain level of subjectivity, despite they are used to make generalizable and even universal claims. Furthermore, this is achieved through positioning and stance-taking.

The next logical question is about the nature of the stance objects. This is because all stance-taking acts are in relation to a particular stance object that discourse participants are aware of. Here, the “target of empathy” notion of Gast et al. (2015) which is the target of people that the impersonal pronoun loosely represents is utilized. These targets of empathy correspond to stance objects in stance-taking frameworks. The target of empathy can bear both empathy and antipathy effects in Turkish depending on the type of the impersonal pronoun.

Stances that impersonal pronouns display usually exhibit certain patterns. Impersonal-*sen* is used to take a positive affective stance and impersonal-*onlar* negative. In other words, by using impersonal-*sen*, the speaker usually expresses positive sentiments towards a stance object. Impersonal-*they* is used to express negative sentiments. Most observed instances of these stances occur when impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*onlar* are used in proximity of each other. This proximity can be the same sentence, as well as the same narrative. Proximity,

however, is not a necessity for these pronouns to exhibit their mentioned stances—they can very well be used to take stances without any other impersonal nearby.

Lastly, impersonal-*biz* is found to be the least stable, being able to exhibit both negative and positive stances depending on the group of people it represents. In the data, impersonal-*biz*'s stance objects were usually “our culture,” “our nation,” “people like us (i.e., the speaker and the hearer(s)),” or “people in general.” Depending on how the speaker desires to position themselves in the discourse, the stances toward these groups can be either way.

Sometimes impersonal-*insan* can be used instead of or together with impersonal-*sen* to take even a stronger positive stance towards the stance object. Impersonal-*insan* usually implies that the experience or the situation in the uttered sentence applies to any normal person. HOMO-impersonal *adam* is also used to take a negative affective stance just like impersonal-*onlar*—but with singular unspecific people in an imaginary scenario. The findings concerning the affective stance-taking of Turkish impersonal pronouns are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. The Summary of Stance-taking Properties of Turkish Impersonal Pronouns

Impersonal pronoun	Affective stance-taking
<i>sen / siz</i> ‘you (sing/formal)’	positive
<i>onlar</i> ‘they’	negative
<i>biz</i> ‘we’	both
<i>insan</i> ‘one, a person’	positive
<i>adam</i> ‘a guy’	negative

Epistemic stance is another type of stance that is important for impersonal pronouns. It implies the knowledgeability of the stance-taker on a stance object. The more certain they are, the stronger their stance. Since one of the significant properties of impersonal pronouns is conveying information, they also imply speakers' epistemic stances. Based on the strength of their claim this stance gets stronger or weaker. It is not based, however, on the type of impersonal pronouns. In other words, unlike affective stances, we cannot make claims like "this particular pronoun is used to take a positive epistemic stance, and this one is used to take negative." They are not fixed to specific pronouns in Turkish.

Speakers are found to position themselves as more knowledgeable, morally superior, as well as disadvantaged, or a victim by using impersonal pronouns. Like epistemic stances, positions also vary much more. The positioning that is found in narratives, however, can be more predictable. This is because, when impersonal pronouns are found in narratives, they generally take up antagonist and protagonist roles depending on their affective stance properties. The role of impersonal pronouns in positioning the agents in narratives is summarized in the following section.

#### 7.1.2 Narratives and small stories

Impersonal pronouns are by their nature unable to refer to particular people which robs them of the possibility of constructing personal experience narratives. They can, however, construct hypothetical narratives in which the situation is imaginary—so are the characters in it.

Although impersonal pronouns are not found to be main characters in PENS, they can take parts in them, generally occurring in orientation and evaluation segments. These parts are comprised of comments and information for the main



events of the story and are crucial places to understand the stances and positionings of the speakers. Because of their lack of real-world referents, impersonal pronouns can only take place in the evaluation and orientation parts of any personal experience narrative.

When impersonal pronouns are used to position speakers in a narrative in terms of the protagonists and antagonists of the story, the role of impersonal pronouns becomes much more predictable. Narratives, including hypothetical ones and small stories, can present protagonists and antagonists. If there is an antagonist versus protagonist positioning where impersonal pronouns are used, almost always impersonal-*sen* and impersonal-*insan* are used to represent the protagonists; and impersonal-*onlar* and impersonal-*adam* are used to represent the antagonists. Positioning a group of people as protagonists naturally means that the speakers are positioned closer to that group of people, positioning them as antagonists the opposite. Impersonal-*biz* in my data is not found to take any consistent picks in that regard. Table 7 summarizes the findings concerning the role of impersonal pronouns in narratives. These findings can be true for all narratives that impersonal pronouns partake in, including personal experience narratives, hypothetical narratives, and small stories.

Table 7. Summary of Roles of Turkish Impersonal Pronouns in Narratives

Impersonal pronoun	Narrative part	Positioning in narrative
<i>sen / siz</i> ‘you (sing/pl or formal)’	Orientation and evaluation	Protagonist
<i>onlar</i> ‘they’	Orientation and evaluation	Antagonist
<i>biz</i> ‘we’	Evaluation	N/A
<i>insan</i> ‘one, a person’	Evaluation	Protagonist
<i>adam</i> ‘a guy’	Orientation and evaluation	Antagonist

## 7.2 Limitations and further research

The presence of impersonal pronouns can be rather sparse. Some dialogues lack them altogether whereas some of them have plenty. Especially the rarer tokens, i.e., the HOMO-impersonals *insan*, and *adam*, may lead that their analyses might lack some nuances that are present in other contexts. Therefore, the main limitation in this thesis arises from the fact that all of the data included friendly contexts. All tapes are recorded either with friends or family. This naturally excludes the potential positioning and stance-taking situations in professional settings, institutional talks, interviews, and so forth. The speakers in the data usually took stances that align with other speakers rather than oppose them due to a lack of personal conflict between speakers in the conversations. For instance, there was a very small amount of disalignment and second-order positioning in the data.

Since the data comes from friendly contexts, other various contexts should be accounted for so as to check the validity of the findings that are found in this thesis. This may provide illuminating results in terms of the usage of impersonal pronouns when the hierarchy of participants, power struggles, and conflicts become more prevalent in the context.

Another aspect that might be looked at in further research is variety. In this thesis, the difference in impersonal pronoun usage among people from different genders, age groups, and various backgrounds is generally ignored. Annotating the data according to these backgrounds might give interesting results as impersonal pronouns are very context-sensitive lexical items that usually suggest clear positionings.

Turkish impersonal pronouns are an underresearched topic. This thesis provided a pragmatic and interactional account without delving into morphological, semantic, or syntactic analyses on the matter—which are needed. As far as this research is concerned, Turkish data largely supports the existing literature in that most of the established impersonal types are valid for Turkish. Since most of the literature largely tackles the impersonal pronouns in Indo-European languages, the similarity of Turkish impersonals to those of the literature is especially noteworthy. More work on Turkish impersonal pronouns may be fruitful in understanding this similarity—or difference if there is a significant one.

## APPENDIX

### TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM

The transcription system adopted in this thesis which is based on Jefferson transcription system.

- bence de [evet                      Overlapping talk  
[aynen] ya
- şeapmış- gitmiş                      Repairs and cut-off words are indicated with  
hyphen
- =    At the end of a turn when the sequential turn  
begins immediately
- (0.5)    Interval between speech, (.) is used for very  
short interval less than 0.5 seconds
- evet    Stress
- EVET    Very loud compared to the rest of the  
conversation
- °evet°    Very silent compared to the rest of the  
conversation
- .hhh and hhh.    Inbreath and outbreath
- e(h)vet    Speaker chuckles and it briefly interrupts the  
word
- ɛaynenɛ    Speaker suppresses laughter
- ((sniffs))    Things that happen in the dialogue that are  
difficult if not impossible to transcribe

- `it(=thesis)`      The actual referents of the pronouns that may be difficult to elicit from the context
- `()`      Inaudible speech



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