

Impersonal middles as disposition ascriptions

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Impersonal middles (IM), such as Dutch (1) and German (2), have been argued to pattern with personal middles (PM), as in (3) and (4), on the basis of a number of semantic and morphosyntactic properties (Ackema & Schoorlemmer 2005; Broekhuis & Corver 2015).

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|-----|---------------------------|---------|-----|-------------------------------|----------|
| (1) | Het danst hier goed. | (Dutch) | (2) | Es tanzt sich hier gut. | (German) |
| | it dances here good | | | it dances REFL here good | |
| | ‘One dances well here.’ | | | ‘One dances well here.’ | |
| (3) | Dit boek leest makkelijk | (Dutch) | (4) | Dieses Buch liest sich leicht | (German) |
| | this book reads easy | | | this book reads REFL easy | |
| | ‘This book reads easily.’ | | | ‘This book reads easily.’ | |

According to Lekakou (2005) and authors following her (e.g. Klingval 2006, Schäfer 2008, Pitteroff 2014), personal middles ascribe a disposition to the syntactic subject, namely a Patient/Theme argument. Lekakou proposes that disposition ascriptions are subject-oriented generics, and argues that a treatment of PM along these lines derives their core properties. I will explore the possibility that a dispositional approach applies to IM as well, arguing in particular that IM ascribe a disposition to the event(uality), rather than to an event participant. I will show that such a dispositional approach to IM fares better than existing alternatives in terms of capturing both the semantic and syntactic properties of the construction and the similarities with PM.