Human impersonal pronouns in Afrikaans
A double questionnaire-base study

Daniël Van Olmen and Adri Breed
Lancaster University and North-West University

Abstract

This paper is the first in-depth study of the main human impersonal pronouns in Afrikaans: *jy* 'you', (*'n*) *mens* '(a) human' and *hulle* 'they'. It adopts a double questionnaire approach, consisting of an acceptability judgment task for one group of participants and a completion task for another group. On the theoretical side, we test the different dimensions proposed in two of the most recent semantic maps of human impersonal pronouns. The first map features vague, inferred and specific existential uses, which vary in the kind/degree of (un)knownness. The second one distinguishes existential contexts that only allow a plural interpretation from existential contexts that are neutral with respect to number. The results of our questionnaires indicate not only that the dimensions of number and (un)knownness involve gradual instead of categorical distinctions but also that they interact with one another, with decreasing acceptability and usage of *hulle* along both of them. More generally, the completion task data suggest that human impersonal pronouns are not the preferred strategy for impersonalization in existential contexts anyway. On the descriptive side, we show that Afrikaans has a division of labor between (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* on the one hand and *hulle* on the other. The former are restricted to universal-internal uses, the latter to universal-external, speech act verb and existential ones. The data also reveal that speakers may consider the less grammaticalized form *'n mens* more acceptable but that they tend to employ more grammaticalized *mens*. It thus attests to the usefulness of combining the two types of questionnaire.

Keywords

impersonal, pronoun, Afrikaans, questionnaire, semantic map

1. Introduction

The overall aim of the present paper is to provide an analysis of the functional potential and actual usage of the main human impersonal pronouns (henceforth HIPs) in Afrikaans. Such an undertaking requires us to first define the notion of HIP and examine the ongoing debate about impersonal uses in the literature. Section 1.1, the first part of this introduction, addresses these issues. It also needs to be shown why Afrikaans and certain HIPs in particular merit closer investigation, which is done in Section 1.2. Moreover, the study of the actual use of those HIPs calls for an understanding of impersonalization strategies in general. This issue is the topic of Section 1.3. In Section 1.4, finally, we sum up our research questions.

After the present introduction, we describe the double questionnaire approach adopted here as our methodology in Section 2. Section 3 present the results of the acceptability judgment task and Section 4 those of the completion task. These findings are discussed in more detail in Section 5. Section 6, lastly, is our conclusion.

1.1 Impersonal uses

The last decade has witnessed a growing interest in HIPs, which can be defined as the pronominal expression of impersonalization. Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 124) characterize this process as 'filling an argument position of a predicate with a variable ranging over sets of human participants without establishing a referential link to any entity from the universe of discourse'. *One* and *they* in (1) can serve as examples.[1] The HIP in (1a) functions as the subject of a sentence that makes a claim about a quasi-universal set of people. No reference is made to a particular (group of) individual(s) traveling to England. The HIP in (1b) does not refer to known human participants either. Yet, unlike in (1a), the existence of at least one specific person that stole the car is implied here. The speaker is just unable or unwilling to identify them in a more accurate way.

(1) a. Eng If **one** goes to England, it's best to take a raincoat.
b. Eng **They** have stolen my car!

These two sentences represent a fundamental dichotomy established in the research into HIPs. *One* can be roughly paraphrased as 'anyone' or 'people' and *they* as 'someone' or 'some people'. Egerland (2003, pp. 75-76) terms the former interpretation 'generic' and the latter 'arbitrary'. In Giacalone Ramat and Sansò (2007, p. 106), they are described as 'human non-referential indefinite' and 'human referential indefinite' respectively. We will follow Gast and van der Auwera (2013, pp. 138-140), who call the use in (1a) 'universal' and the one in (1b) 'existential'.

Further and subtler distinctions have been proposed in two of the most recent semantic maps of HIPs. Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 604) map of third person plural HIPs, like *they* in (1a), is given in Figure 1.

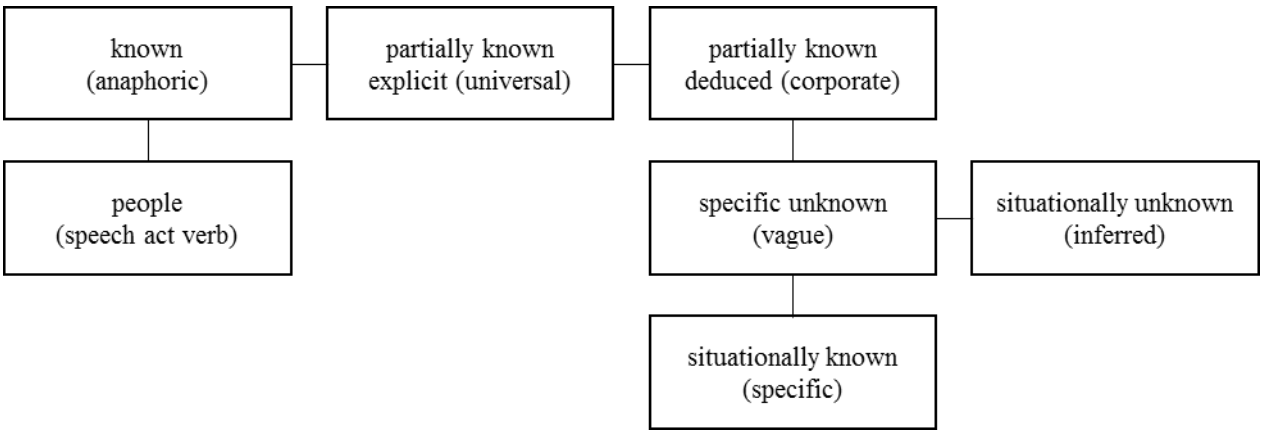

Figure 1: Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) map of third person plural HIPs.

Besides the personal or 'known (anaphoric)' use, Siewierska and Papastathi (2011) distinguish two so-called semi-impersonal ones, three truly impersonal ones and a speech act verb one. The semi-impersonal uses are exemplified in (2). In (2a), the group of individuals can be considered partially known because the sentence contains an explicit expression, i.e. *in Greece*, that helps identify the referents to some extent. The HIP is also universal in that it ranges over all human participants in Greece. In (2b), by contrast, *they* is employed existentially. It implies that there exists a particular set of people who have put up the speed cameras. They are still partly known, though. The reason is not some overt indication, like in (2a), but the predicate itself. We can deduce from it that they

[1] In the examples, Afr, Dut, Eng and Ger are short for Afrikaans, Dutch, English and German respectively.

are a collective that has the right and/or power to install speed cameras. The police and the government are two likely candidates. This semi-impersonal existential use is typically called 'corporate' (a term that goes back to Pesetsky 1996, p. 39).

(2) a. Eng In Greece, **they** drive quite unpredictably.
b. Eng **They** have installed new speed cameras here.

The three uses that Siewierska and Papastathi (2011) regard as genuinely impersonal are illustrated in (1b) and (3). They differ in the type or level of (un)knownness, as argued by Cabredo Hofherr (2006) among others. In the 'vague' use in (1b), the set of human participants cannot be identified by the interlocutors but there is said to be at least one specific person who committed the known act of stealing the car. In (3a), the speaker gathers from the situation, i.e. the smell in the room, that the essentially unknown event of consuming pizza there must have occurred and that an unidentifiable (group of) eater(s) must have existed. This use is labeled 'inferred'. In the 'specific' use in (3b), the event takes place at a particular place and time and the interlocutors may thus have certain expectations about who is performing it. Despite the situational potential for identification, the (set of) individual(s) knocking on the door is not explicitly named, however.

(3) a. Eng **They** have eaten pizza in here. (I can smell it.)
b. Eng **They** are knocking on the door. (It is your mother.)

The final use in Figure 1 that needs to be discussed features a speech act verb and a HIP that can very easily be replaced by 'people'. The sentence in (4) is a case in point.

(4) Eng **They** say that avocados are extremely rich in vitamins.

Cases like (4) resemble vague *they* in (1a) in that the set of human participants is simply not known. Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 585) maintain, though, that a separate node for them on the map is justified: 'They do not really fall under vague in Cabredo Hofherr's classification since they are typically not episodic, i.e. do not refer to a specific event. Note also that they typically cannot be substituted by *someone*, as the referent of *they* clearly corresponds if not to the whole human race then to some group of people at a given time or place.' They also point out that, in some languages (e.g. Finnish), the third person plural does not really have any impersonal uses but can occur in the speech act verb use. Conversely, in other languages (e.g. French), it possesses various impersonal uses but cannot really be employed in a sentence like (4). Within a classical semantic map approach (see Haspelmath 2003, p. 217), these facts are an argument for an analysis of the speech act verb use as a direct offshoot of the personal use of 'they'.[2]

Gast and van der Auwera's (2013, p. 141) semantic map, which is presented in Figure 2, aims to capture all HIPs (excluding their original non-impersonal uses). The uses of HIPs like 'one', 'man' and 'you' are, in other words, added to those of 'they'. The overlap with Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) map is only partial, however. The area covered by Figure 1 is split up in a

[2] The other uses and their connections are motivated by similar observations, of course. French, for instance, has been said to only allow *ils* 'they' in vague contexts (see Cabredo Hofherr 2006, p. 242). Dutch *ze* 'they', by contrast, seems to accept vague and inferred uses but not – or at least to a lesser extent – specific ones (see Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 597). The Syrian Arabic third person plural, finally, appears to have vague and specific uses but no inferred ones (see Cabredo Hofherr 2006, p. 242). These (dis)similarities account for the configuration of the three uses in Figure 1.

slightly different way in Figure 2.

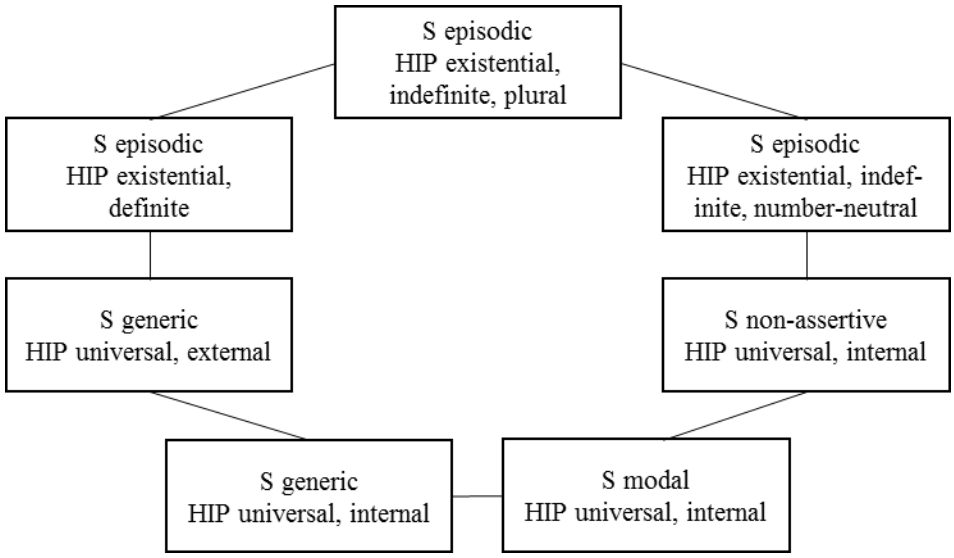

Figure 2: Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) semantic map of all HIPs.

Let us start with the extra uses. Gast and van der Auwera (2013) add three universal ones, on top of the one universal use in Figure 1. They are argued to differ from (2a) in that they all take an internal rather than an external point of view. In a universal-internal use, 'a 'center of consciousness' (e.g. the speaker or hearer) identifies, or is identified, with the set of referents under discussion' (Gast and van der Auwera 2013, p. 139). The speaker of (5a), for example, may or may not live in Greece him- or herself but, by using *you*, he or she urges the interlocutors to put themselves in its inhabitants' shoes. In a universal-external use, such as (2a) and (5b), no such identification takes place.

(5) a. Eng In France, **you** eat snails.
b. Eng In France, **they** eat snails.

The additional uses are distinguished from each other by the state of affairs of the sentence (S in Figure 2; see Gast and van der Auwera 2013, pp. 143-151 for the cross-linguistic evidence behind the distinctions). In (5a), the state of affairs is veridical, i.e. it is presumed to be true. In (6a) and (1a), repeated as (6b), it is non-veridical. The difference between these two uses is that the non-veridicality comes from a modal expression of necessity or possibility in the first one, like *can't* in (6a), and from a non-modal trigger (e.g. interrogatives) in the second one. In (6b), it is triggered by the conditional subclause in which *one* occurs.

(6) a Eng **You** can't learn a language in six weeks.
b. Eng If **one** goes to England, it's best to take a raincoat.

The first existential use that Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 140) identify is 'definite' in the sense that 'the referents … [are somehow] accessible in the discourse environment'. It corresponds to Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) corporate use in (2b), repeated as (7a). In the other two ex-

istential uses in Figure 2, the referents cannot be accessed in any way. They are thus truly impersonal. The difference between (7b) and (7c) has to do with number.

(7) a. Eng **They** have installed new speed cameras here.
b. Eng **They** have gathered here for a party.
b. Eng **They** have submitted a complaint against her.

In (7b), the set of human participants whose existence is implied is necessarily plural: the event of gathering somewhere involves at least two individuals. In (7c), by contrast, the HIP is neutral with regard to number: there might be one person who has filed a grievance against the woman or more than one.[3]

In short, the maps in Figures 1 and 2 make different distinctions in the genuinely impersonal existential domain. Siewierska and Papastathi (2011) divide it up along a dimension of (un)knownness, Gast and van der Auwera (2013) along a dimension of number. The latter explain their rejection of the former's analysis as follows: 'We have collapsed the distinction between 'vague', 'inferred' and 'specific' … because we lack the evidence for it in the languages investigated by us.' (Gast and van der Auwera 2013, p. 143). This claim is quite surprising. Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 596) questionnaire actually reveals many a significant difference in the third person plural's acceptability between vague, inferred and specific uses, in languages that feature in Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) study too. Moreover, it is unclear whether their own distinction between plural and number-neutral uses is not based solely on introspection. They argue that *they* can occur in both contexts, as in (7b) and (7c), while German *sie* 'they' and Dutch *ze* 'they' are necessarily plural (see Gast and van der Auwera 2013, pp. 142, 149). Our intuition, however, is that *ze* can be number-neutral as well. The headline of an article on a Belgian insurance company's website in (8) appears to support our judgment. The (lack of) context makes it impossible to determine whether multiple burglars were involved or just one. Both interpretations seem possible.

(8) Dut ***Ze*** *hebben mijn autosleutels gestolen tijdens een inbraak maar mijn auto staat er wel nog. Wat nu?*
'They have stolen my car keys during a burglary but my car is still there. What now?'

In this paper, we therefore seek to answer, in a quantitative way, the questions whether the dimension of number is relevant for HIPs and, if so, whether it interacts with the dimension of (un)knownness and how.[4]

A final difference between Figures 1 and 2 concerns Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) speech act verb use in (4), repeated as (9a). Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 142) point out that it 'has been exempt from consideration because it is not entirely clear to [them] whether or not it can be subsumed under one of the other nodes' (see the above discussion of example 4) and that it 'requires more (esp. diachronic) investigation'. We agree with this assessment, considering (9b) in

[3] Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 140) describe this use as 'vague with respect to number'. To avoid confusion with Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) notion of vagueness, we prefer to call it 'number-neutral'.

[4] We can obviously not expect the HIPs in the language under investigation in the present article to exhibit any differences between their vague, inferred and specific uses or between their plural and number-neutral ones. As has already been mentioned, the dimension of number is said not to apply to English *they*, for instance. Similarly, the dimension of (un)knownness does not really manifest itself in the third person plural HIPs in Hungarian and Spanish according to Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 596). Sections 3 and 4 will show, however, that both dimensions are indeed relevant for Afrikaans.

particular.

(9) a. Eng **They** say that avocados are extremely rich in vitamins.
b. Ger ***Man*** *sagt, dass Avokados viele Vitamine enthalten.* (Brandt p.c.)
'They say that avocados are extremely rich in vitamins.'

German *man* 'one, they' is a pronoun dedicated to the expression of impersonalization. Interestingly, it can occur in the speech act verb use too, as (9b) shows (and unlike *sie*). This fact suggests that there must be some link between this use and the (semi-)impersonal ones which does not pass through the third person plural's personal use (see Figure 1). For the present article's purposes, it means that we definitely need to take the speech act verb use into account if we want to describe the entire functional potential of the HIPs in Afrikaans.

1.2 Afrikaans

The HIPs in European languages have been researched quite extensively (e.g. Egerland 2003, Siewierska 2011) and those in West Germanic seem to have received particular attention (e.g. Hoekstra 2010, Malamud 2012, van der Auwera et al. 2012, Gast 2015). But, with the exception of Kirsten (2016, pp. 189-201), the literature is largely silent on Afrikaans, arguably the fourth most widely spoken West Germanic language. A quick look at (*'n*) *mens* '(a) human' makes clear that this lack of interest is unwarranted. Like English, Afrikaans no longer possesses its ancestral 'man'-pronoun but, unlike English, it has developed a new one, as (10a) reveals (see Kirsten 2016, pp. 190-191). The fact that the indefinite article *'n* 'a(n)' is optional can be regarded as a sign of its ongoing grammaticalization (see Giacalone Ramat and Sansò 2007, p. 102 and Kirsten 2016, p. 192). Moreover, (*'n*) *mens* differs from the other 'man'-pronouns in West Germanic in a number of respects. It relies on the second person singular for its possessive and reflexive forms, for instance (see Donaldson 1993, pp. 139-140). German *man* and Dutch *men* 'one, they', by contrast, draw on the third person singular masculine. *Jou* 'your' in (10a) and *sein* 'his' in (10b) are cases in point.

(10) a. Afr **(*'n*)** ***Mens*** *kan nie* ***jou*** *kar hier parkeer nie.*
'One cannot park one's car here.'
b. Ger ***Man*** *kann* ***sein*** *Auto hier nicht parken.* (Cabredo Hohferr 2010, p. 7)
'One cannot park one's car here.'

It is also said that (*'n*) *mens* cannot be repeated as a subject in a complex clause and that *jy* 'you' needs to be used instead, as in (11a). *Man* and *men* do not have this restriction, as (11b) shows.

(11) a. Afr *Wat moet* ***mens*** *doen as* ***jy*** *'n giftige appel eet?*
'What should one do if one eats a poisonous apple?'
b. Dut *Wat moet* ***men*** *doen als* ***men*** *een giftige appel eet?*
'What should one do if one eats a poisonous apple?'

Conversely, the German and Dutch 'man' pronouns are essentially limited to the syntactic function of subject (see Draye 2014, pp. 242-245) but their Afrikaans counterpart is not. In (12a), for example, it serves as an object. In such a case, German would use *einem* 'one' as a suppletive object form of *man* while Dutch would resort to *je* 'you', as in (12b) and (12c) respectively.

(12) a. Afr *Die Fourier transformasie stel **mens** in staat stel om die hele elektromagnetiese spektrum as 'n funksie vas te lê.*
'The Fourier transformation enables one to capture the entire electromagnetic spectrum as a function.'

b. Ger *Die Fourier-Transformation erlaubt **einem**/*__man__ das gesamte elektromagnetische Spektrum als Funktion zu erfassen*. (Papen p.c.)
'The Fourier transformation enables one to capture the entire electromagnetic spectrum as a function.'

c. Dut *De Fouriertransformatie stelt **je**/*__men__ in staat om het gehele elektromagnetische spectrum als een functie vast te leggen.*
'The Fourier transformation enables one to capture the entire electromagnetic spectrum as a function.'

These formal contrasts suggest that (*'n*) *mens* deserves to be studied in more detail. In the present paper, the focus is on its functional potential and usage (see Van Olmen et al. in press on the issues discussed in this section). We seek to answer the questions which impersonal uses the Afrikaans 'man'-pronoun can fulfill, whether any differences exist between *'n mens* and *mens* in functions and use and how (*'n*) *mens* relates to the other HIPs in the language. To be more precise, we will also examine the functional potential and usage of *jy* 'you' and *hulle* 'they'. The impersonal use of these personal pronouns is a common phenomenon cross-linguistically and in West Germanic (see Siewierska 2004, pp. 211-212) and, intuitively, the second person singular and the third person plural are the main HIPs in Afrikaans, together with (*'n*) *mens*.[5] Our study will enable us to check some of Kirsten's (2016) findings. She claims, for instance, that *hulle* is extremely infrequent as a HIP in her corpus of 20th- and 21st-century Afrikaans but her only example, of a speech act verb use, could signal that its other impersonal uses have not been considered. Kirsten (2016, p. 199) also notes that, nowadays, the second person singular greatly outnumbers (*'n*) *mens* as a HIP. However, the latter's lexical uses are included in her comparison and it is not entirely clear whether the former's inevitable ambiguity between personal and impersonal interpretations in the data has really been taken into account in her figures. In other words, the question whether *jy* indeed occurs more often than (*'n*) *mens* as a HIP deserves further attention.

1.3 Impersonalization strategies

It is clear from the literature (e.g. Coussé and van der Auwera 2012, Posio and Vilkuna 2013, Beliën 2016) that HIPs are usually not the only way to express impersonalization in languages. Afrikaans is no exception. Consider, for instance, the specific number-neutral use of *hulle* in (13a). Roughly the same meaning can be conveyed by the indefinite pronoun *iemand* 'someone' or an impersonal passive, as in (13b) and (13b) respectively.

[5] Kirsten (2016, p. 194) also mentions the use of the formal second person *u* 'you' as a HIP in Afrikaans but shows that the form hardly ever occurs anymore, in both its personal and impersonal functions. Likewise, we are aware that the first person too can serve as a HIP (cf. Zobel 2016 on German *ich* 'I') but the results of the completion task (see Section 4) confirm our intuition that *jy*, (*'n*) *mens* and *hulle* are the only frequent HIPs in Afrikaans, at least in the uses under investigation here. Note, finally, that Kirsten (2016, pp. 189-201) treats the use of *hy* 'he' versus *sy* 'she' to refer back to gender-neutral human concepts (e.g. 'speaker' in a linguistics article) on a par with HIPs. However, following Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 124), we do not regard *hy* or *sy* as a HIP in this function because it does create a referential link with a discourse entity. We will therefore pay no attention to it in the rest of this article.

(13) a. Afr ***Hulle*** *klop aan die deur.*
'They are knocking on the door.'
b. Afr ***Iemand*** *klop aan die deur.*
'Someone is knocking on the door.'
c. Afr ***Daar word*** *aan die deur* ***ge****klop.*
'They are knocking on the door' (lit. 'There is knocked on the door.')

Similarly, in the speech act verb use, *hulle* can quite easily be replaced by the indefinite plural noun phrase *mense* 'people', as the sentences in (14) show.

(14) a. Afr ***Hulle*** *sê 'n avo het baie vitamine.*
'They say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.'
b. Afr ***Mense*** *sê 'n avo het baie vitamine.*
'People say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.'

Interestingly, it has been observed for several 'man'-pronouns that, in actual usage, they predominately function as a universal-internal HIP and are rarely used universal-externally or existentially (e.g. Zifonun 2001 on German *man* and Fonesca-Greber and Waugh 2003 on French *on* 'one, they'). In the same vein, Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 590) note that 'there are no instances of either the inferred or the specific existential' use in their corpus study of third person plural HIPs in nine languages. Their data also reveal a cross-linguistic tendency for 'the corporate and vague uses [to] supersede the speech act use which in turn supersedes the universal [use]' (Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 592). These facts can be explained in two not mutually exclusive ways. The infrequency of the uses at issue in the HIPs might be due to the fact that speakers just express (specific types of) universal-external and existential impersonalization less often than universal-internal impersonalization. It may also result from the fact that, for some reason, HIPs are liked as a strategy to convey the latter but disliked as one to articulate the former. In the present paper, we aim to shed light on the second possible explanation and examine to what extent HIPs are the preferred strategy for the different impersonal uses distinguished in Section 1.3.

1.4 Research questions

In light of the literature reviewed in Sections 1.1 to 1.3, this article seeks to answer a number of more general and/or theoretical questions. First, is number a significant dimension for truly impersonal existential HIPs, as argued by Gast and van der Auwera (2013)? Second, if so, (how) does it interact with the dimension of (un)knownness, which is central to Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) semantic map? Third, are there any (dis)similarities in preference for HIPs as an impersonalization strategy between different impersonal uses and, if so, which ones? In addition, we want to answer a few more descriptive questions. First, what is the functional potential of the three main HIPs in Afrikaans, (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle*? Second, which uses are they really employed for? Third, and lastly, (how) does the more grammaticalized form *mens* differ from *'n mens*?

2 Methodology

2.1 Preliminaries

Possibly the most common way to study the various uses of a linguistic item is corpus linguistics

(e.g. Gries 2009). For our purposes, this methodology poses a number of practical as well as more fundamental problems, though. One issue concerns the non-impersonal uses of *jy*, *hulle* and (*'n*) *mens*. The first two HIPs have personal uses as well. The other function of (*'n*) *mens* is that of an indefinite noun phrase with the meaning 'a human, mankind'. As Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, pp. 587-588) and Van Olmen et al. (in press) show, however, it is not always easy or possible to distinguish the impersonal from the personal or indefinite noun phrase uses in context. Discourse is intrinsically fuzzy after all. The inherent ambiguity of discourse also plays a part in another, perhaps more serious problem for the corpus approach here. One of our aims is to test the rather fine-grained distinctions made in the semantic maps in Section 1.1 and, specifically, the dimensions of (un)knownness and number. To achieve this objective, we would ideally need to be able to carefully manage the contexts in which the HIPs occur. Unfortunately, corpora do not really give us such control.

A third well-known issue (see Section 1.3) is that some of the impersonal uses are extremely infrequent in HIPs. Yet, it is not necessarily because a HIP is not employed in a particular way in corpora that it does not allow the use in question. A corpus study may thus not suffice to capture the functional potential of (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle*. A last, related problem has to do with our goal to examine the extent to which HIPs are the preferred strategy for impersonalization in different uses. As mentioned earlier, simple corpus frequencies do not always provide a good indication, since some impersonal contexts could just be rare. In principle, it would obviously be possible to search a corpus for a wide range of impersonalization strategies, to analyze their uses and to determine the proportion of HIPs for every use. Such a study would still struggle with the fuzziness of discourse and the functional classification of the attestations, though.

The present paper therefore adopts a double questionnaire approach rather than a corpus approach. To describe the full functional potential of the Afrikaans HIPs, we use an acceptability judgment task. To get an idea of the actual usage of (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle* and, more generally, the preference for HIPs as an impersonalization strategy in different uses, a completion task is employed.

2.2 Acceptability judgment task

Acceptability judgments have a long-standing tradition in linguistic research. They have typically been considered a sign of the well-formedness or grammaticality of the structures under examination (e.g. Wasow and Arnold 2005). It is also well-known that, as Bard et al. (1996, p. 33) note, they 'need not be one-to-one reflections of grammaticality' since they 'may be based, for example, on estimated frequency of usage, on conformity to a prescriptive norm or a prestigious register, or on degree of semantic or pragmatic plausibility'. This plausibility in various contexts is, in fact, what is at stake in this study. From a structural point of view, most sentences with (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle* are probably equally acceptable, especially in an indefinite noun phrase or personal interpretation. In environments that trigger an impersonal reading, however, they are expected to diverge. Each item of our questionnaire thus first sketches such a discourse context. It then asks to rate the four sentences with the different HIPs as a way to complete the discourse, using a five-point scale in which one stands for very unacceptable and five for very acceptable. In short, the items look like (15) without the translation.

(15) Afr *Iemand lewer kommentaar op jou vriendin se liefde vir lekker kos. Jy is geïrriteerd en antwoord: "Sy kan dit bekostig. En buitendien…*
'Someone comments on your female friend's love for fine dining. You are irritated

and reply: “She can afford it and, besides, …’

... mens leef net een keer.”	1	2	3	4	5
... ’n mens leef net een keer.”	1	2	3	4	5
... jy leef net een keer.	1	2	3	4	5
... hulle leef net een keer.	1	2	3	4	5

‘… one lives only once.”’

Siewierska and Papastathi (2001, p. 593) argue that HIPs are often a ‘language phenomen[on] characteristic of colloquial speech’. For that reason, we try to keep the contexts as informal and conversational as possible and invite the reader to take the final speaker’s perspective, like in (15). As to the use of a Likert scale, we recognize its limitations for acceptability judgment tasks (see Bard et al. 1996, pp. 33-38 on, inter alia, the assumption here that only five degrees of acceptability exist). Yet, the alternative of magnitude estimation, which has become quite popular in syntactic research (e.g. Featherston 2005), does not really lend itself very well to a questionnaire involving subtle contextual changes. Moreover, it has recently been criticized for its cognitive suppositions and shown to produce results that actually closely resemble those of the traditional methods (see Sprouse and Almeida 2012). Our participants, all undergraduate students, can also be assumed to be familiar with Likert scales, which makes our approach more readily accessible.

The uses that are studied in our acceptability judgment task include: the speech act verb one, unique to Siewierska and Papastathi’s (2011) semantic map; the three universal-internal uses, specific to Gast and van der Auwera’s (2013); and the universal-external and corporate ones, shared by the two maps. The context in (15) is one of our instances of a universal-internal use in a veridical clause (UNI-INT-VER for short). In (16), we illustrate each of the other five contexts with one of our items. Their abbreviations are given in brackets.

(16) a. speech act verb use (SAV)
Afr *Jou kollega wonder waarom jy die afgelope twee weke al slegs avokado eet vir middagete. Jy het iets op die internet gelees daaroor en jy antwoord: “**Mens**/**’n Mens**/**Jy**/**Hulle** sê ’n avo het baie vitamine.”*
‘Your colleague wonders why you have just been eating avocado for lunch for the last two weeks. You read something on the internet about this and you reply: “They say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.”’

b. universal-internal use in a non-veridical non-modal clause (UNI-INT-NVER-NMOD)
Afr *Jy en jou broer is besig om jul niggie te help om haar tas te pak vir haar reis na Engeland. Wanneer jy vir haar die splinternuwe reënjas aangee wat jy die vorige dag vir haar gekoop het, vra jou broer waarom jy juis dít gekoop het. Jy antwoord: “As **mens**/**’n mens/jy/hulle** na Engeland toe gaan, is dit noodsaaklik om ’n reënjas in te pak.”*
‘You and your brother are helping your female cousin pack her suitcase for her trip to England. When you hand her the brand new raincoat that you bought her her the day before, your brother asks you why you bought that in particular. You reply: “If one goes to England, it is necessary to pack a raincoat.”’

c. universal-internal use in a non-veridical modal clause (UNI-INT-NVER-MOD)
Afr *Jou ma neem nou al vir ses weke lank Franse taallesse. Jy vra haar of sy vir jou ’n stukkie teks na Frans sal vertaal vir werk. Sy is bietjie geïrriteerd en antwoord: “**Mens**/**’n Mens**/**Jy**/**Hulle** kan nie ’n taal in ses weke leer nie.”*

'Your mother has been taking French classes for six weeks now. You ask her whether she could translate a text into French for you for work. She is a little bit irritated and replies: "One cannot learn a language in six weeks."'

d. universal-external use (UNI-EXT)
   Afr *'n Vriend van jou is op pad na Griekeland vir besigheid en hy vra jou of dit 'n goeie idee is om 'n huurmotor daar te kry om mee rond te ry. Aangesien jyself daar 'n onaangename ervaring gehad het, antwoord jy: "Ek dink nie dit is 'n goeie idee nie. In Griekeland ry* ***mens/'n mens/jy/hulle*** *nogal onvoorspelbaar."*
   'A friend of yours is going to Greece for business and he asks you whether it would be a good idea to rent a car there to get around. Because you had a bad experience there, you reply: "I don't think that is a good idea. In Greece, they drive quite unpredictably."'

e. corporate use (EXI-COR)
   Afr *Jou vriend gee jou 'n rygeleentheid werk toe. Jy sien padbordjies langs die pad wat motoriste waarsku dat spoedkameras aangebring is op die roete. Jy sê vir jou vriend: "****Mens/'n Mens/Jy/Hulle*** *het nou spoedlokvalle hier opgesit."*
   'Your friend is driving you to work in the morning. You see signs warning drivers that speed cameras have been installed on the road. You tell your friend: "They have installed speed cameras here."'

The truly impersonal existential uses, which the two semantic maps split up differently, are taken into account as well, of course. More specifically, to test the dimensions of number and (un)knownness, we combine them in the questionnaire. Both contexts in (17), for instance, involve an inferred reading. The speaker concludes from the situation, i.e. the beer cans or the smell, that a fundamentally unknown event of gathering or cooking by an unidentifiable (set of) individual(s) must have occurred. The examples differ in number, though. The HIP in (17a) has a necessarily plural interpretation, that in (17b) a number-neutral one: meeting for a party requires more than one person, making popcorn does not.

(17) a. inferred plural use (EXI-INF-PL)
   Afr *Jy en jou vriendin vat jou kinders een oggend parkie toe om te gaan speel. Daar lê 'n klomp leë bierblikkies in die parkie rond en jy sê vir jou vriendin: "****Mens/'n Mens/Jy/Hulle*** *het hier bymekaargekom vir 'n partytjie."*
   'You and your friend are taking your kids to the playground in the park one morning. There are a lot of empty beer cans lying around in the park and you tell your friend: "They have gathered here for a party."'

b. inferred number-neutral use (EXI-INF-NN)
   Afr *Jy en jou kollega besluit om gou jul toebroodjies in die teekamer te gaan eet. Toe julle in die teekamer kom, ruik jy iets en jy sê vir jou kollega: "****Mens/'n Mens/Jy/Hulle*** *het springmielies hierbinne gemaak."*
   'You and your colleague decide to quickly go and eat your sandwiches in the coffee room. On entering the coffee room, you smell something and you tell your colleague: "They have made popcorn in here."'

In (18), each of the four remaining combined contexts, i.e. vague and specific uses with plural and number-neutral interpretations, is exemplified with one of the items in our acceptability judgment task.

(18) a. vague plural use (EXI-VAG-PL)
Afr *'n Vriend vra vir jou: "Wat het toe gebeur met daardie bekende Latyns-Amerikaanse rebellieleier?" Jy antwoord: "Wel, nadat hy uit gevangenis vrygelaat is, het* ***mens/'n mens/jy/hulle*** *hom publiek gestenig."*
'A friend asks you: "What ever happened to that famous Latin American rebel leader?" You answer: "Oh, after he was released from prison, they stoned him to death in public."'

b. vague number-neutral use (EXI-VAG-NN)
Afr *Jy bel jou vriend om vir hom te sê dat die sak wat hy die vorige dag verloor het, weer gevind is. Jy sê: "****Mens/'n Mens/Jy/Hulle*** *het jou sak in die park gekry."*
'You ring up your friend to tell him that the bag that he lost the day before has been found. You say: "They have found your bag in the park."'

c. specific plural use (EXI-SPE-PL)
Afr *Terwyl jou vriend in die stort is, begin die landlyntelefoon en sy selfoon amper gelyktydig lui. Jy skree vir jou vriend: "Maak gou!* ***Mens/'n Mens/Jy/Hulle*** *bel jou op altwee jou fone!"*
'While your friend is in the shower, his landline and his cellphone start ringing at about the same time. You call out to your friend: "Hurry up! They are calling you on both of your phones!"'

d. specific number-neutral uses (EXI-SPE-NN)
Afr *Jy is in die badkamer as jy hoor daar word aan die voordeur geklop. Jy roep na jou woonstelmaat en sê: "Kan jy gou gaan kyk?* ***Mens/'n Mens/Jy/Hulle*** *klop aan die deur."*
'You are in the bathroom when you hear knocking on the front door. You call out to your flat mate and say: "Can you go and have a look? They are knocking on the door."

Together, (15) to (18) comprise twelve different uses (see the Appendix for an overview), each of which is examined by means of two contexts in the questionnaire. Its first part features one item for every use in a random order. In the second part, the other twelve items are presented, also in a random order.

To conclude, let us point to the differences between the present acceptability judgment task and that of Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, pp. 592-599). First, our questionnaire was filled in by seventy-two people. They collected acceptability judgments from, on average, a mere fifteen participants per language. Admittedly, this fairly low number is actually quite impressive given the cross-linguistic nature of their research. Still, the contrast highlights the substantial amount of data on which our study is based. Second, the earlier acceptability judgment task only considers the uses that third person plural HIPs are presumed to be able to possess. Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 593) even leave out the speech act verb use because it 'is so evidently tied to specific verbs rather than situations' (yet, see Section 1.1 on German *sie* not allowing it). As we seek to examine the functional potential of not only *hulle* but also (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* and do not wish to make any assumptions, all uses distinguished in the existing semantic maps are covered here. Third, and finally, the sentences that Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, pp. 593-595) provided as possible endings of their contexts do not necessarily contain HIPs. They include, among other things, passives and indefinite pronouns and are all plausible ways to complete the contexts. The goal was, in essence,

to compare the acceptability of 'they' in various uses with other (more) appropriate impersonalization strategies. The present acceptability judgment task, by contrast, aims to give a first description of the main HIPs in Afrikaans. The options that we offer are therefore limited to sentences with (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle*, even though some are likely to score low for particular uses. We are also aware of the risk of the conceivable situation that participants do not consider any of the HIPs acceptable. They may rate the most passable one higher than they would when faced with other more plausible non-pronominal impersonalization strategies. The issue is partially addressed by the instruction not to refrain from assigning identical numbers to two or more equally (un)acceptable sentences. It is, to some extent, compensated for by our completion task too.

2.3 Completion task

This task also concerns the twelve uses discussed in Section 2.2 and is made up of the same twenty-four items in precisely the same order as the acceptability judgment one. The difference is that the slot of the HIP is left open here. The items thus look like (19).

(19) Eng Your father tells you that your grandmother has decided to take driving lessons and he expresses doubts about her chances of success. You reply: "…… am/are/is never too old to learn."

The questionnaire asks participants to complete the context themselves. Not all possible answers are of interest to us, of course. For that reason, the exact instruction goes as follows: 'You should fill in the blank in such a manner that the sentence is saying something about people in general or about people who are unknown to you or, in other words, whom you do not want to or are unable to identify in any specific way.' It is meant to make participants use an impersonalization strategy. The fact that the blank always has the function of subject limits their options, however. Passives, for one, are excluded and HIPs are, to a degree, deliberately favored. These constraints allow us to examine the extent to which pronouns are the preferred impersonalization strategy in different uses. For instance, if people tended to insert other strategies in a "HIP-conducive" context like (19) (e.g. *people*), it would not be unreasonable to assume that HIPs were not preferred for generic universal-internal uses. Note also that, in Afrikaans, unlike in English, verbs are not inflected for person and number and, hence, that participants can basically fill in any subject that they want.

The completion task is, in a sense, similar to the questionnaire for Gast's (2017) online database for a typology of HIPs, to which we contributed Afrikaans data in July 2017. Probably inspired by Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, pp. 592-599) questionnaire (see Section 2.2), like our study, it too asks informants to fill in the appropriate HIP(s) in short pieces of discourse that test specific contextual factors like plural versus number-neutral interpretations. It even features some of the same classic examples from the literature (e.g. 'one only lives once'). We want to stress, though, that our completion and acceptability judgment tasks – with the contexts combining Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) and Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) distinctions in the truly existential domain, for instance – were developed independently and for a slightly different purpose. Gast's (2017) questionnaire, which also collects information about the binding and agreement properties of HIPs, is aimed at individual researchers. With the potential help from one or more informants, they provide the facts of "their" language. These data are expected to feed into cross-linguistic generalizations about the patterns and limits of variation in HIPs. The questionnaire does thus not (need to) allow for the subtle differences in usage or acceptability that we seek to uncover by having a large group of native speakers perform our tasks. It is also not particularly interested in other

impersonalization strategies. Our completion task, by contrast, is set up in such a way as to find out whether they are perhaps preferred to HIPs in certain contexts.

2.4 Participants

The acceptability judgment task questionnaire was distributed, in an arbitrary way, among about half of the undergraduate students of Afrikaans at the North-West University Potchefstroom (South Africa) in May 2016.[6] They were asked to fill out a paper version of the acceptability judgment task at the start of three separate lectures. We stressed that participation was voluntary and that not answering the questionnaire would have no impact on their studies. All students chose to partake in the research, however. We also emphasized that participation was anonymous, although some demographical information would be collected (i.e. date and place of birth, gender, highest education level, native language(s) and potential knowledge of other languages), and that they could withdraw their answers up until one month after taking part. While no request to pull out of the study was made, it could have been granted on the basis of the demographical data. We then gave some instructions regarding the task of assessing acceptability. The students were encouraged, on the one hand, to make full use of the scale from one to five and, on the other hand, not to hesitate in assigning the same number to two or more sentences if they sounded equally (un)acceptable. We also pointed out that we were interested in their own linguistic intuition and not in what might be right or wrong according to certain norms, and that their answers should be as instinctive as possible and not be altered unless truly necessary. Lastly, it was said that there was no real time limit. Every student finished the questionnaire within twenty minutes, though.

A paper version of the completion task was given to the other half of the undergraduate students of Afrikaans at the North-West University Potchefstroom. The preliminary remarks about participation in the acceptability judgment task were made for the present questionnaire too. Again, all students decided to take part in the study and no request to withdraw from it was received afterward. We also stressed that we were interested in their own linguistic intuition and that their answers should be as instinctive and as close to their everyday conversational speech as possible. No time limit was set but every participant completed the questionnaire within twenty minutes. Importantly, because we had some concerns about the potential vagueness of the general instruction, we illustrated it with (19) on the information sheet. An English example was chosen so that we could make our point with an impersonalization strategy which does not exist in Afrikaans (see Section 4, however). Fortunately, English poses little problem for young South Africans, who can be presumed to be familiar with the language (the demographical data corroborate this assumption). In the instructions, we indicated that *one* would match the description of people in general or people who are not known to them or whom they would not want to or be able to identify in any specific way. We also pointed out that *she* or *grandparents* would not fit the description. The former was said to result in a sentence about a particular person, i.e. the grandmother. The latter was said to produce one about a larger group of people who were still identifiable as having a specific characteristic, i.e. that of being grandparents.

[6] Ethical approval for the acceptability judgment task as well as the completion task was obtained from the North-West University Ethics Committee of the Language Matters and the Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee in April 2016. Special thanks are due to Prof. Thys Human and Mrs. Janien Linde for giving up some of their lecture time for our study.

2.5 Statistics[7]

The results of our acceptability judgment task will be presented as means and standard deviations (std for short). These descriptive statistics will give us, respectively, the average score of a specific HIP in a specific context and a measure of the variation between all of our participants' scores. A low standard deviation signals that they tend to be close to the mean, a high one that they are spread out more (see Rasinger 2013, pp. 134-136).

To compare the scores of the same HIP in two contexts or two HIPs in the same context, we will calculate two-tailed paired t-tests. They check whether one mean is significantly different from another one while taking their standard deviations into account. Our t-tests are two-tailed because we generally have no real a priori expectations about the direction of the difference between scores (see Baayen 2008, p. 81) and paired because our data come from the same population (see Rasinger 2013, p. 200). When one finding is contrasted with more than one other finding in this way (e.g. post hoc, following an analysis of variance or ANOVA for short), our normal level of significance will be Bonferroni-corrected: it is divided by the number of comparisons made. This correction reduces the risk that we attach too much importance to one (or more of the numerous) test(s) producing a p-value lower than 0.05 as it/they may just be due to chance (see Baayen 2008, p. 114).

Occasionally, we will also need to compare more than two means (with their standard deviations) at once. ANOVAs can be employed for this purpose (see Rasinger 2013, p. 209). We will rely on those with repeated measures in particular since they take into consideration the fact that all our scores come from by the same group of people (see Baayen 2008, p. 264). In cases where the impact on acceptability of one independent variable is examined, a one-way ANOVA will be used. When we want to test the effects of two variables (e.g. plural/number-neutral versus vague/inferred/specific contexts in the truly existential domain), a two-way ANOVA will be performed (see Rasinger 2013, pp. 210-217).

For the completion task, lastly, we will give the raw numbers of the various impersonalization strategies and their percentages. To examine possible (dis)similarities between contexts, Fisher's exact tests will be calculated. They will tell us whether the different proportions of particular HIPs or of HIPs versus other impersonalization strategies – the categorical dependent variables – in those contexts – the independent variables – are a matter of chance or not, even if the absolute numbers are low (see Baayen 2008, p. 122). To mitigate the risk of false positives, we will again Bonferroni-correct our level of significance when doing multiple comparisons.

3 Results of the acceptability judgment task

3.1 Overview

Of the seventy-two participants, two were excluded because they did not consider themselves native speakers of Afrikaans and twenty-two because they did not follow the instructions and only gave scores to the acceptable HIPs. The remaining forty-eight participants were all born between 1992 and 1997. Three quarters of them identified as female and the rest as male. The descriptive statistics of their answers are presented in Table 1. For every use (see the abbreviation in the leftmost column), we provide the mean score (mean) of each HIP (see the uppermost row) and its standard deviation (std).

[7] All data have been analyzed statistically with SPSS (IBM Corp. 2013).

Use		*mens*	*'n mens*	*jy*	*hulle*
UNI-INT-NVER-NMOD	mean	4.05	4.54	4.83	1.88
	std	*1.36*	*0.81*	*0.64*	*1.31*
UNI-INT-NVER-MOD	mean	3.84	4.68	4.67	1.94
	std	*1.45*	*0.59*	*0.87*	*1.31*
UNI-INT-VER	mean	3.98	4.55	4.79	1.69
	std	*1.31*	*0.86*	*0.65*	*1.08*
UNI-EXT	mean	3.10	3.38	2.25	4.90
	std	*1.61*	*1.51*	*1.54*	*0.37*
EXI-COR	mean	1.41	2.10	1.23	4.85
	std	*0.83*	*1.31*	*0.64*	*0.63*
EXI-VAG-PL	mean	1.79	2.34	1.42	4.75
	std	*1.25*	*1.32*	*0.98*	*0.68*
EXI-VAG-NN	mean	1.58	3.67	1.45	4.66
	std	*1.02*	*1.31*	*1.07*	*0.82*
EXI-INF-PL	mean	1.48	1.84	1.41	4.74
	std	*0.94*	*1.15*	*0.97*	*0.64*
EXI-INF-NN	mean	1.49	3.17	2.04	4.45
	std	*0.95*	*1.40*	*1.42*	*1.01*
EXI-SPE-PL	mean	1.74	2.38	1.21	4.54
	std	*1.21*	*1.36*	*0.68*	*0.94*
EXI-SPE-NN	mean	1.61	3.83	1.11	3.44
	std	*0.99*	*1.19*	*0.50*	*1.45*
SAV	mean	1.72	2.15	1.72	4.91
	std	*1.11*	*1.31*	*1.24*	*0.46*

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the acceptability judgment task.

For the sake of clarity, the mean scores of (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle* from Table 1 are plotted in Figure 3. The uses are ordered roughly along the lines of the semantic maps examined in Section 1.1, with the universal-internal uses on the left and the existential-specific ones and the speech act verb one on the right. Note that the connecting lines have been added to make it easier for readers to distinguish (partly) overlapping dots and are not to be taken as suggesting some kind of linear development from left to right.

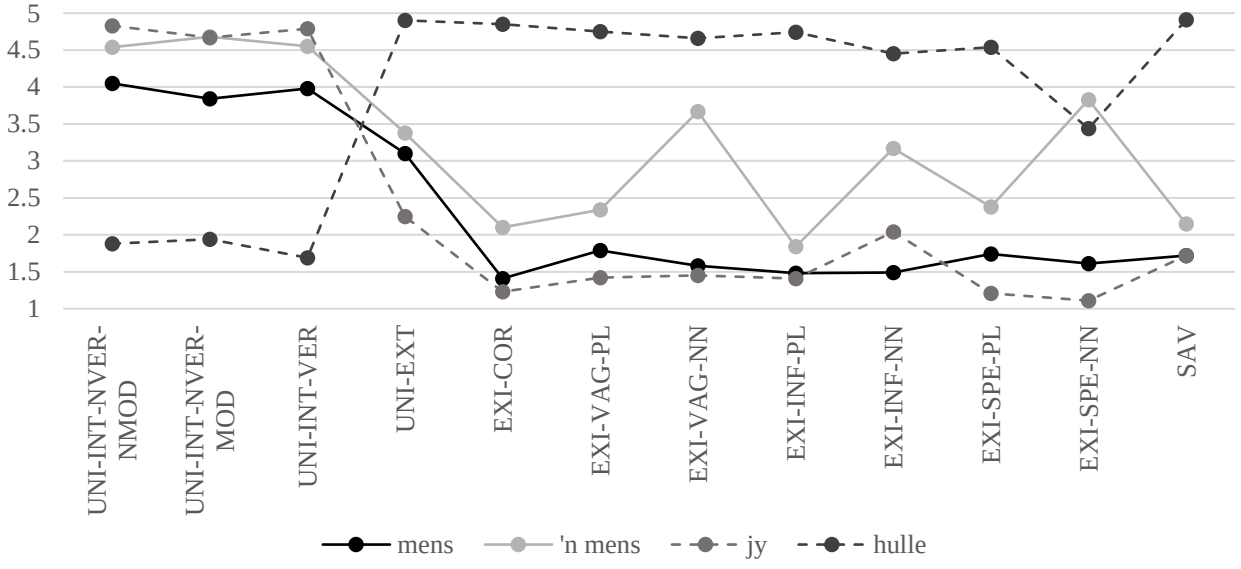

Figure 3: Distribution of the mean scores of all HIPs for the twelve impersonal uses.

A quick glance at the results suggests that some kind of division of labor exists between (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* on the one hand and *hulle* on the other. The former HIPs are discussed in Section 3.2. The latter is the topic of Section 3.3.

3.2 (*'n*) *Mens* and *jy*

It is clear from Figure 3 that, on the whole, (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* are not regarded as very acceptable in in non-universal-internal contexts. The highest score is that of *'n mens* for the existential-specific-plural use, i.e. 2.38 (std 1.36). There are two exceptions, though. First, *'n mens* scores between 3.17 (std 1.40) and 3.83 (1.19) in the three number-neutral contexts and is significantly more acceptable in these uses than in their respective plural counterparts ($p < 0.01$ for each t-test). The explanation probably lies in the fact that the form can function not only as a HIP but also as an indefinite noun phrase with the meaning 'a human'. In a number-neutral context like (17b), *'n mens* may receive a (semantically marked) non-impersonal reading, i.e. 'a human has made popcorn in here'. In a plural one like (17a), such an interpretation is less plausible: 'a human has gathered here for a party'. Supporting evidence for this explanation comes from *'n mens*'s unambiguously impersonal variant. *Mens* is considered significantly less acceptable ($p < 0.01$ for all t-tests) in all six uses and its low scores, ranging from 1.48 (std 0.94) to 1.79 (std 1.25), do not appear to be sensitive to the distinction between plural and number-neutral contexts ($p > 0.05$ for every t-test). Not unimportantly, the differences that *'n mens* exhibits for number do indicate that the items in the questionnaire succeed in coercing plural versus neutral readings.

Second, the acceptability of (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* for the universal-external use – 3.38 (std 1.51), 3.10 (std 1.61) and 2.25 (std 1.54) respectively – is significantly lower than that for the universal-internal-veridical one and higher than that for the existential-corporate one ($p < 0.01$ for all t-tests). These findings could be taken as a sign of an incipient extension into the external domain of the universal-internal HIPs and (*'n*) *mens* in particular (second person singular HIPs tend to be limited to the internal domain cross-linguistically, see Siewierska 2004, p. 212). Yet, informal discussions with native speaker linguists and literary scholars at the North-West University Potchefstroom suggest that no such evolution is taken place (see also Van Olmen et al. in press). The likely reason for the intermediate scores is that the difference between internal and external uses is just a matter of perspective (see Section 1.1). It seems hard to stop certain people from identifying with the set of human participants at issue. Even in a context like (16d), repeated as (20), some of our colleagues could imagine a scenario where driving quite unpredictably would also apply to them when visiting Greece.

(20) Eng A friend of yours is going to Greece for business and he asks you whether it would be a good idea to rent a car there to get around. Because you had a bad experience there, you reply: "I don't think that is a good idea. In Greece, …… drive(s) quite unpredictably."

The intersubjective variation in the potential of an internal interpretation is evident from the standard deviations of, for instance, *jy*. It has one of 0.65 in the universal-internal-veridical use and one of 0.64 in the existential-corporate use but, for the universal-external context, its standard deviation rises to 1.54.

Let us now turn to the universal-internal uses of (*'n*) *mens* and *jy*. A two-way ANOVA shows

that there is no interaction between the HIPs and the three contexts and that these contexts do not have any significant effect on acceptability either ($p > 0.05$ in both cases). In other words, for none of the HIPs do any differences exist between the non-veridical-non-modal, non-veridical-modal and veridical uses. The choice of HIP, however, is shown to have a real impact on acceptability ($p < 0.01$). Our post hoc Bonferroni-corrected t-tests reveal that, in all three contexts, *mens* scores significantly lower than both *'n mens* and *jy* ($p < 0.01$ across the board). The more grammaticalized form of the 'man'-pronoun in Afrikaans is thus considered less acceptable than the less grammaticalized one, although its means still average around 3.96. *'n Mens* and *jy* do not seem to differ from each other ($p > 0.01$), apart from in the non-veridical-non-modal use. For unclear reasons, *jy* (mean 4.83, std 0.64) is judged more acceptable than *'n mens* (mean 4.54, std 0.81) in contexts like (16b), repeated as (21).

(21) Afr *As **'n mens/jy** na Engeland toe gaan, is dit noodsaaklik om 'n reënjas in te pak.*
'If one goes to England, it is necessary to pack a raincoat.'

Note that, strictly speaking, we are unable to say whether the participants understand *'n mens* as a HIP or an indefinite noun phrase in universal-internal cases such as (21). It may be somewhat more natural to interpret it as 'one' here than as 'a human' but the potential ambiguity between these two readings is almost unavoidable with a grammaticalizing 'man'-pronoun (see Giacalone Ramat and Sansò 2007, pp. 99-102). It would have been possible, of course, to exclude the indefinite noun phrase interpretation by providing predicates that involve possessives or reflexives: *'n mens* employs third person singular masculine forms as 'a human' but suppletive second person singular ones as a HIP (see Section 1.2). However, this option might have favored the HIP *jy* unduly.

3.3 *Hulle*

Figure 3 indicates that *hulle* is the only truly acceptable HIP for non-universal-internal contexts in Afrikaans. They include the universal-external use, the speech act verb use and all existential uses. The question now is whether *hulle* is considered equally acceptable in each of these contexts. The answer is negative, according to a one-way ANOVA ($p < 0.01$). Our post hoc Bonferroni-corrected t-tests show that the HIP is significantly less acceptable in existential-specific-number-neutral uses like (22) (mean 3.44, std 1.45) than in all other ones ($p < 0.001$).

(22) Afr ***Hulle** klop aan die deur.*
'They are knocking on the door.'

Furthermore, *hulle* is found to score significantly lower in existential-inferred-number-neutral contexts like (23a) (mean 4.45, std 1.01) than in universal-external (mean 4.90, std 0.37), existential-corporate (mean 4.85, std 0.63) and speech act verb (mean 4.91, std 0.46) contexts such as (23b) to (23d) respectively ($p < 0.001$ across the board).

(23) a. Afr ***Hulle** het springmielies hierbinne gemaak.*
'They have made popcorn in here.'
b. Afr *In Griekeland ry **hulle** nogal onvoorspelbaar.*
'In Greece, they drive quite unpredictably.'
c. Afr ***Hulle** het nou spoedlokvalle hier opgesit.*
'They have installed speed cameras here.'

d. Afr ***Hulle*** *sê 'n avo het baie vitamine.*
'They say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.'

In existential-specific-plural contexts like (24) too (mean 4.54, std 0.94), *hulle* is significantly less acceptable than in universal-external and speech act verb uses ($p < 0.001$ in both cases) (but not existential-corporate ones).

(24) Afr ***Hulle*** *bel jou op altwee jou fone!*
'They are calling you on both of your phones!'

Admittedly, most of the differences are fairly small. Still, in short, *hulle* appears to be slightly more problematic in existential-inferred and -specific contexts and their number-neutral types in particular. Relatively speaking, it seems to be the most robust in the so-called semi-impersonal universal-external and existential-corporate uses (see Section 1.1) and in the speech act verb use.

The preceding paragraph already suggests that both the dimension of (un)knownness and that of number play a part in the acceptability of *hulle*. This impression is substantiated by a two-way ANOVA that compares vague/inferred/specific and plural/number-neutral. The results reveal that (un)knownness, as well as number, has a significant impact on the scores of the HIP ($p < 0.01$ in both cases) and that the two dimensions indeed interact ($p < 0.01$). To be more precise, our post hoc Bonferroni-corrected t-tests show that significant differences exist between the existential-specific-number-neutral use in (22) (mean 3.44, std 1.45) and every other use ($p < 0.001$ across the board). They also point to potentially meaningful differences between existential-inferred-number-neutral uses like (23a) (mean 4.45, std 1.01) on the one hand and existential-inferred-plural ones like (24a) (mean 4.74, std 0.64, $p = 0.009$) and existential-vague-plural ones like (24b) (mean 4.75, std 0.68, $p = 0.013$) on the other hand.

(24) a. Afr ***Hulle*** *het hier bymekaargekom vir 'n partytjie.*
'They have gathered here for a party.'
b. Afr *Nadat hy uit gevangenis vrygelaat is, het* ***hulle*** *hom publiek gestenig.*
'After he was released from prison, they stoned him to death in public.'

In sum, the dimension of number can be said to have an effect in that, in line with Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) semantic map, the HIP is judged less acceptable in number-neutral than in plural contexts – for specific and inferred uses. The dimension of (un)knownness can also be argued to be relevant in the sense that, in keeping with Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) map, *hulle* is less acceptable in specific than in vague contexts – for number-neutral uses – and that number appears to play a role in specific and inferred contexts but not in vague ones.

4 Results of the completion task

4.1 Overview

Of the eighty participants, four were excluded from the study because they identified as non-native speakers of Afrikaans and one because he was born in 1958 and was considerably older than all of the other respondents. The remaining seventy-five participants were born between 1992 and 1997. Three quarters of them identified as female and the rest as male. Their overall profile is thus very similar to that of the participants of the acceptability judgment task (see Section 3.1).

In the data analysis, we make a general distinction between the three main HIPs, other frequent impersonalization strategies, infrequent impersonalization strategies and answers that do not fulfill the conditions of the task. The latter, first of all, do not fit the description of people in general or people who are not known or whom one would not want to or be able to identify in any specific way (see Section 2.3). Examples of such "irrelevant" answers include the personal pronoun *sy* 'she' in the universal-internal-veridical context in (25a), *die regering* 'the government' in the existential-corporate use in (25b) and *dokters* 'doctors' in the speech act verb context in (25c).

(25) a. Afr ***Sy*** *is nooit eensaam in die geselskap van 'n goeie boek nie.*
'She is never alone with a good book.'
b. Afr ***Die regering*** *het alweer die belasting verhoog.*
'The government has raised the taxes again.'
c. Afr ***Dokters*** *sê 'n avo het baie vitamine.*
'Doctors say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.'

A form that does match the above description but makes up less than 0.5% of the data is categorized as an infrequent impersonalization strategy here. The first person plural *ons* 'we', for instance, is found to function as a HIP twice, in the universal-internal-veridical context in (26a) (see Siewierska 2004, p. 211 on the impersonal use of this personal pronoun). The noun phrase *'n persoon* 'a person' is another case in point. It refers to an indefinite individual and is attested a few times, mainly in existential-number-neutral uses such as (26b). Our last example is remarkable in that the participant actually had to change the form of the verb *sê* 'say' into a past participle to make the context work: the speech act verb use in (26c) features the only case of an impersonal passive in the answers. The rest of the present article mostly lumps the various "minor" impersonalization strategies together. Two forms of particular interest are discussed in Sections 4.2 and 5, though.

(26) a. Afr ***Ons*** *leef net een keer.*
'We live only once.'
b. Afr ***'n Persoon*** *het jou sak in die park gekry.*
'A person has found your bag in the park.'
c. Afr ***Daar word gesê*** *dat daardie huis wemel van die spoke.*
'It is said that that house is crawling with ghosts.'

The "major" non-HIP impersonalization strategies fall into three groups. The strategy illustrated in the existential-vague-number-neutral context in (27a) involves indefinite pronouns. Another common way to impersonalize in our data is the indefinite plural noun *mense* 'people', as in the existential-inferred-plural use in (27b). The third strategy, of which (27c) is an universal-external example, uses the definite plural noun *die mense* 'the people'.

(27) a. Afr ***Iemand*** *het jou sak in die park gekry.*
'Someone has found your bag in the park.'
b. Afr ***Mense*** *het hier bymekaargekom vir 'n partytjie.*
'People have gathered here for a party.'
c. Afr *In Griekeland ry* ***die mense*** *nogal onvoorspelbaar.*
'In Greece, the people drive quite unpredictably.'

The main HIPs, finally, are (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle*, of course.

Figure 4 presents, for each impersonal use, the raw numbers and the proportions of "irrelevant" forms versus forms that can be considered impersonalization strategies (ISs). It is clear that cases such as (25) account for a substantial share of the answers, i.e. 12%. This result was, to some extent, to be expected. A completion task is open-ended in nature after all. Moreover, ours is concerned with a very specific and probably not very straightforward semantic domain. What is perhaps more surprising is the considerable variation between the various uses. The proportion made up by "irrelevant" forms varies from 4% for universal-external contexts to 26% in universal-internal-non-veridical-modal ones. The latter use in particular stands out, together with the existential-corporate (18.67%) and existential-vague-number-neutral (23.33%) uses.

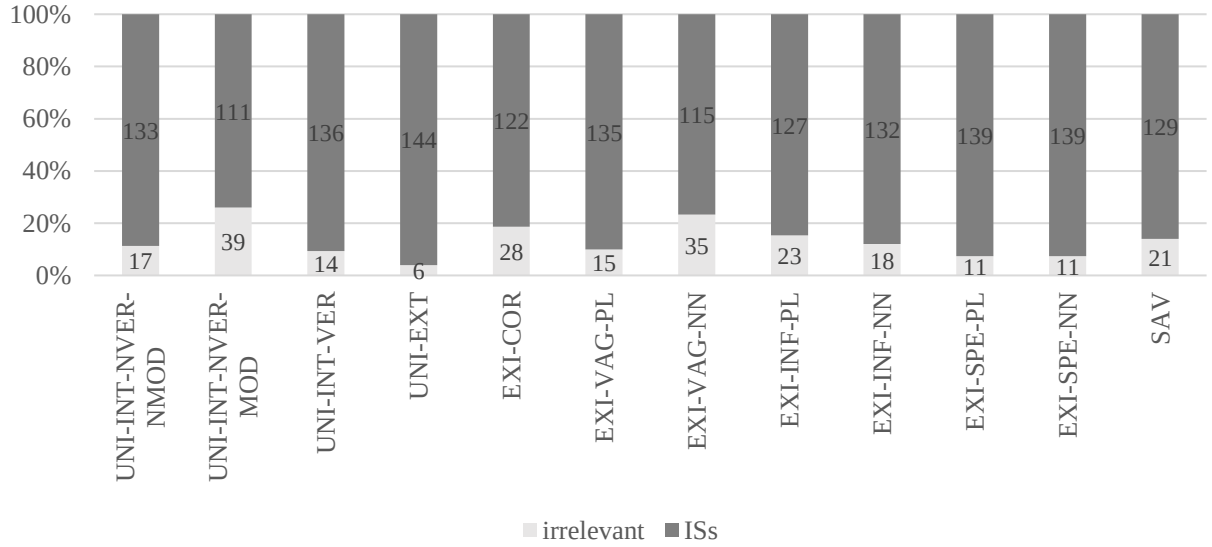

Figure 4: Irrelevant cases versus impersonalization strategies in the completion task.

We do not have a simple explanation for these high percentages. In universal-internal-non-veridical-modal contexts like (16c), repeated here as (28a), many respondents were tempted to attribute the predicate to a specific speech participant and ignore the general instructions. The same applies to the existential-vague-number-neutral use. Possible reasons why this temptation was less strong in the other universal-internal contexts are the generic nature of the sentences in the veridical items and the conditional subordinate clauses in the non-veridical-non-modal ones. These environments might just be more favorable to impersonalization strategies. The fact that existential-vague-number-neutral uses stand out among the genuinely impersonal existential ones may be due to number and (un)knownness. References to particular speech participants could be argued to be less likely in plural contexts. Given the typically dialogic character of the items in the questionnaire, the situation would have to be such that the predicate was somehow applicable to both the speaker and the addressee. In the existential-inferred items, such as (17b), repeated as (28b), the speaker infers the predicate from information newly available to them as well as to the addressee at the time of speaking. It would therefore be somewhat peculiar for the speaker to ascribe it to themselves or to their interlocutor. Similarly, in the existential-specific items, like (18d), repeated as (28c), the predicate is linked to a specific time and place, i.e. the present here. If it is clear from the situation that none of the speech participants is actually involved in the state of affairs, it would be strange to attribute it to them.

(28) a. Eng Your mother has been taking French classes for six weeks now. You ask her whether she could translate a text into French for you for work. She is a little bit irritated and replies: "…… cannot learn a language in six weeks."

b. Eng You and your colleague decide to quickly go and eat your sandwiches in the coffee room. On entering the coffee room, you smell something and you tell your colleague: "…… has/have made popcorn in here."'

c. Eng 'You are in the bathroom when you hear knocking on the front door. You call out to your flat mate and say: "Can you go and have a look? …… am/is/are knocking on the door."

The high proportion of "irrelevant" forms in the existential-corporate use, by contrast, clearly results from its semi-impersonal character. By definition, in this type of context, the predicate itself gives clues as who has the ability or right to realize it (see Section 1.1). Hence, it should not come as a complete surprise that, in (16e), for instance, repeated as (29), many a respondent disregarded the general instructions and provided answers like *die polisie* 'the police'.

(29) Eng Your friend is driving you to work in the morning. You see signs warning drivers that speed cameras have been installed on the road. You tell your friend: "…… has/have installed speed cameras here."

The "irrelevant" forms deserve to be examined in detail. Such an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of the present article, however. The focus in what follows is on the impersonalization strategies in our data and particularly the HIPs.

Table 2 gives, for each impersonal use, the raw numbers of minor impersonalization strategies (minor IS), indefinite pronouns (Indef Pro), indefinite plural nouns (Indef PL N) and definite plural nouns (Def PL N) and the HIPs (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle* – as well as their percentages vis-à-vis the sum of impersonalization strategies. For ease of comprehension, these results are presented in graphic form in Figure 5. The striped areas on every bar stand for HIPs and the plain grey ones for other impersonalization strategies.

Use		minor IS	Indef Pro	Indef PL N	Def PL N	*mens*	*'n mens*	*jy*	*hulle*
UNI-INT-NVER-NMOD	#	2	6	0	0	72	23	30	0
	%	*1.50*	*4.51*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*54.14*	*17.29*	*22.56*	*0.00*
UNI-INT-NVER-MOD	#	3	2	1	0	73	18	14	0
	%	*2.70*	*1.80*	*0.90*	*0.00*	*65.77*	*16.22*	*12.61*	*0.00*
UNI-INT-VER	#	3	1	2	0	91	28	11	0
	%	*2.21*	*0.74*	*1.47*	*0.00*	*66.91*	*20.59*	*8.09*	*0.00*
UNI-EXT	#	0	3	56	16	11	2	3	53
	%	*0.00*	*2.08*	*38.89*	*11.11*	*7.64*	*1.39*	*2.08*	*36.81*
EXI-COR	#	0	14	3	1	0	0	0	104
	%	*0.00*	*11.48*	*2.46*	*0.82*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*85.25*
EXI-VAG-PL	#	1	10	59	3	0	0	0	62
	%	*0.74*	*7.41*	*43.70*	*2.22*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*45.93*
EXI-VAG-NN	#	3	82	1	0	0	1	0	28
	%	*2.61*	*71.30*	*0.87*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.87*	*0.00*	*24.35*
EXI-INF-PL	#	1	87	25	1	0	0	0	13

	%	*0.79*	*68.50*	*19.69*	*0.79*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*10.24*
EXI-INF-NN	#	1	122	1	0	0	0	0	8
	%	*0.76*	*92.42*	*0.76*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*6.06*
EXI-SPE-PL	#	0	45	64	0	0	0	0	30
	%	*0.00*	*32.37*	*46.04*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*21.58*
EXI-SPE-NN	#	2	134	2	0	0	0	0	1
	%	*1.44*	*96.40*	*1.44*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.72*
SAV	#	1	5	47	2	0	0	0	74
	%	*0.78*	*3.88*	*36.43*	*1.55*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*57.36*

Table 2: Distribution of the impersonalization strategies in the completion task.

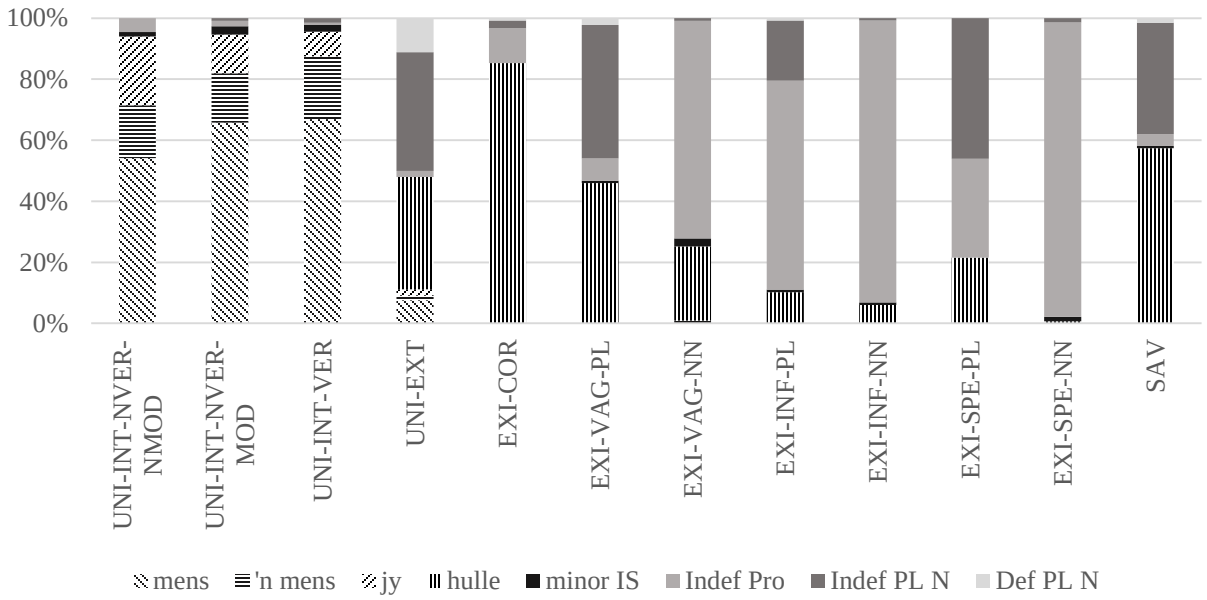

Figure 5: Distribution of the impersonalization strategies in the completion task.

A cursory look at the findings confirms the dichotomy, discussed in Section 3, between the universal-internal uses and all other ones. The differences do not appear to be restricted to the actual HIPs that they favor, though. Figure 5 suggests that they also differ in their preference for HIPs as an impersonalization strategy in the first place. The universal-internal contexts are explored in Section 4.2, the other ones in Section 4.3.

4.2 Universal-internal uses

Together, the main HIPs – (*'n*) *mens* and *jy*, to be precise – make up almost all impersonalization strategies in the universal-internal uses. They account for 93.98% in non-veridical-non-modal contexts, 94.59% in non-veridical-modal ones and 95.59% in veridical ones. The only non-universal-internal use that comes close is the existential-corporate one: 85.25% of the answers include a HIP, i.e. *hulle*. The fifth highest percentage of HIPs – just the third person plural again – is found in the speech act verb use but it amounts to a mere 57.63%. Our Bonferroni-corrected Fischer exact tests reveal that significant differences exist between the existential-corporate use and the universal-internal-veridical use and between the speech act verb use and the other four uses ($p < 0.005$ across the board). Thus, all in all, universal-internal uses exhibit a much stronger preference for HIPs than non-universal-internal ones.

The universal-internal uses do not differ in their preference for HIPs over other impersonalization strategies. It is worth taking a closer look at the actual HIPs that our participants use, however. Of the three options, i.e. *mens*, *'n mens* and *jy*, the more grammaticalized form of the 'man'-pronoun is by far the most popular choice. *Mens* comprises 54.14% of the non-veridical-non-modal cases, 65.77% of the non-veridical-modal ones and 66.91% of the veridical ones. These percentages are higher than (the sum of) those of *'n mens* (17.29%, 16.22% and 20.59% respectively) and of *jy* (22.56%, 12.61% and 8.09% respectively). In view of the results of the acceptability judgment task, this finding is rather unexpected. *Mens* may be considered significantly less acceptable than *'n mens* and *jy* in all three universal-internal uses (see Section 3.2) but it occurs much more often than the other HIPs when participants are asked to fill in an impersonalization strategy themselves. This difference between acceptability and usage is discussed further in Section 5.

The distribution of (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* also varies slightly between universal-internal contexts. To be more precise, Bonferroni-corrected Fisher exact tests show that the non-veridical-non-modal use differs from the veridical one ($p < 0.01$) (and that there are no other significant differences). A more detail comparison reveals that *jy* drops from 22.56% of the non-veridical-non-modal cases to 8.09% of the veridical ones. *Mens*, by contrast, is found to increase from 54.14% to 66.91% and *'n mens* to remain fairly stable with 17.29% of the non-veridical-non-modal cases and 20.59% of the veridical ones. The reasons for this variation are not clear to us: is *mens* somehow better suited to generic sentences like (30a) than *jy* and/or is there something about *jy* that makes it comparatively popular in non-veridical-non-modal contexts like (30b)?

(30) a. Afr ***Mens*** *is nooit eensaam in die geselskap van 'n goeie boek nie.*
'One is never alone with a good book.'
b. Afr *As* ***jy*** *na Engeland toe gaan, is dit noodsaaklik om 'n reënjas in te pak.*
'If you go to England, it is necessary to pack a raincoat.'

The fact that, in the non-veridical-modal use too, *jy* is down (to 12.61%) and *mens* is up (to 65.77%) could be taken to suggest that the explanation lies in the second rather than the first question. To answer it, a deeper understanding of the pragmatics of (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* is probably needed, though. We leave these issues for further research (in the vein of Fernández 2013 on Spanish, Deringer et al. 2015 on English, German and Russian and Jensen and Gregersen 2016 on Danish).

Apart from ('*n*) *mens* and *jy*, few impersonalization strategies are used more than a handful of times in our universal-internal contexts. The data contain, for instance, three cases of *mense*, of which (31a) is an example. They also include nine attestations of an indefinite pronoun. In (31b), the pronoun is *niemand* 'nobody', which receives a universal interpretation in the negative subordinate clause here. The other eight attestations involve *iemand*. This strategy seems typical of the non-veridical-non-modal use, as in (31c). This fact is in line with Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 147), who argue that 'indefinite pronouns functioning as existential quantifiers' can occur in such contexts, as well as in existential-number-neutral ones.

(31) a. Afr *Sy bly darem glo dat* ***mense*** *nooit moet opgee nie.*
'She continues to believe that people should never give up.'
b. Afr *Sy bly darem glo dat* ***niemand*** *nooit moet opgee nie.*
'She continues to believe that nobody should ever give up.'
c. Afr *Wat gebeur as* ***iemand*** *suur melk drink?*
'What happens if someone drink sour milk?'

What is interesting about the minor impersonalization strategies in universal-internal uses is that they feature a number of forms that count as HIPs. The first one is the first person plural *ons*, which has already been discussed in Section 4.1. The second form is the numeral *een* 'one'. This strategy is employed only once, for the veridical context in (32a). The third and final form is the article-less noun *man* 'man', which is also found just one time in the data, i.e. for the non-veridical-non-modal context in (32b).

(32) a. Afr ***Een*** *is nooit eensaam in die geselskap van 'n goeie boek nie.*
'One is never alone with a good book.'
b. Afr ***Man*** *kan nie 'n taal in ses weke leer nie.*
'One cannot learn a language in six weeks.'

Two examples are clearly not sufficient to claim that Afrikaans has a 'one'-pronoun and a second 'man'-pronoun. Neither *een* nor *man* has been described as a HIP in the literature on the language. Moreover, the participant using *een* identifies as a native speaker of both Afrikaans and English. It is therefore not unlikely that (32a) is essentially an Anglicism. The participant giving the answer in (32b) also mentions the two languages as his mother tongues. In the case of *man*, however, we can probably reject the possibility of external influence on Afrikaans since English does not actually have a 'man'-pronoun (anymore, see Los 2002). It thus remains to be seen what the status of *man* is (e.g. is it simply a mistake or is it a feature of a particular variety?) – and perhaps also how widespread *een* is in Present-day Afrikaans, given its close contact with English in the South African context (e.g. Donaldson 1991).

4.3 Non-universal-internal uses

The only HIP employed in non-universal-internal contexts is *hulle*. As pointed out in Section 4.2, it makes up most of the impersonalization strategies in the existential-corporate and speech act verb uses such as (33).

(33) a. Afr ***Hulle*** *het alweer die belasting verhoog.*
'They have raised the taxes again.'
b. Afr ***Hulle*** *sê dat daardie huis wemel van die spoke*.
'They say that that house is crawling with ghosts.

In the other non-universal-internal contexts, however, a majority of the participants appear to avoid *hulle*. The proportion that it accounts for varies from just under half of the existential-vague-plural cases to almost none of the existential-specific-number-neutral ones. HIPs are, in other words, not the preferred impersonalization strategy in contexts like (34).

(34) a. Afr *In Griekeland ry* ***hulle*** *nogal onvoorspelbaar.*
'In Greece, they drive quite unpredictably.'
b. Afr ***Hulle*** *het hier bymekaargekom vir 'n partytjie.*
'People have gathered here for a party.'
c. Afr ***Hulle*** *klop aan die deur.*
'They are knocking on the door.'

Bonferroni-corrected Fisher exact tests reveal that the relative number of instances of *hulle* is significantly larger in existential-corporate contexts (85.25%) than in all other ones ($p < 0.001$ across the board). The speech act verb use (57.36%) is not noticeably different from the existential-vague-plural one (45.93%) but its proportion of cases of *hulle* is significantly bigger than that of the rest of the uses ($p < 0.001$ again). Similarly, existential-vague-plural contexts do not differ substantially from universal-external ones (36.81%) but the HIP does make up a significantly larger share of the answers in the former use than in the remaining ones ($p < 0.001$ once more), such as the existential-vague-number-neutral and existential-specific-plural uses (24.35% and 21.58% respectively). On the whole, the results suggest that the usage of *hulle* is strongest in the semi-impersonal (i.e. existential-corporate and universal-external) uses and the speech act verb and existential-vague-plural ones. In the truly impersonal contexts, its use is marginal and, especially in the existential-inferred-plural/number-neutral (10.24%/6.06%) and existential-specific-number-neutral (0.72%) ones, negligible.

To assess the impact of the dimensions of number and (un)knownness, the truly impersonal uses merit closer inspection. If number à la Gast and van der Auwera (2013) plays a role, we expect *hulle* to be employed less in number-neutral contexts than in plural ones (and certainly never the other way around). Our Bonferroni-corrected Fisher exact tests show that such significant differences are indeed found in the existential-vague use (24.35% versus 45.93%) as well as in the existential-specific use (0.72% versus 21.58%) ($p < 0.001$ in both cases). Existential-inferred contexts, however, do not seem to be affected by number. In both the number-neutral and plural types, *hulle* is hardly ever used (6.06% versus 10.24%). In the same vein, if (un)knownness à la Siewierska and Papastathi (2011) is a meaningful factor, *hulle* is predicted to be less frequent in existential-inferred and -specific contexts than in existential-vague ones (and, under no circumstances, vice versa). The statistics confirm that the HIP accounts for a substantially smaller share of the existential-inferred and -specific cases than of the existential-vague ones in plural contexts (10.24% and 21.58% versus 45.93%) and that the same holds for number-neutral contexts (6.06% and 0.72% versus 24.35%) ($p < 0.001$ across the board). Note, for the sake of completeness, that no significant differences are found between the existential-inferred and the existential-specific uses. In short, the results indicate that the usage of *hulle*, though limited to start with in the contexts in question, decreases along both the dimension of number (with the exception of the existential-inferred use) and that of (un)knownness.

Let us now briefly turn to the impersonalization strategies that the participants employ instead of *hulle*. The first recurrent one is the definite plural noun *die mense*. It comes up in a number of uses but only occurs somewhat regularly (11.11%) in universal-external contexts. The reason why this definite strategy does not actually pose a problem in an impersonal clause like (35) is that the set of individuals can partly be identified by the locative phrase *in Griekeland* 'in Greece' anyway (see Section 1.1).

(35) Afr *In Griekeland ry* ***die mense*** *nogal onvoorspelbaar.*
'In Greece, the people drive quite unpredictably.'

The second recurring strategy is the indefinite plural noun *mense*. Its usage seems to be determined largely by its plural character. Plurality is at work in the universal-external use, of which 38.89% of the cases involve *mense*, and in the speech act verb use, of which 36.43% of the cases look like (36a). It is not a coincidence that Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 604) refer to the latter context as the 'people' use. The impact of the strategy's plurality is particularly evident from the remaining uses. In existential-plural contexts such as (36b), our participants resort to *mense* in 43.70% of the

vague instances, 19.69% of the inferred ones and 46.04% of the specific ones. Existential-number-neutral contexts, by contrast, hardly ever feature this strategy (0.87% of the vague cases, 0.76% of the inferred ones and 1.44% of the specific ones). In (36c), for example, it is probably a little strange for a speaker to attribute the predicate to more than one person if there is no evidence from which they can infer the existence of multiple individuals.

(36) a. Afr ***Mense*** *sê 'n avo het baie vitamine.*
'People say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.'
b. Afr *Nadat hy uit gevangenis vrygelaat is, het* ***mense*** *hom publiek gestenig.*
'After he was released from prison, people stoned him to death in public.'
c. Afr ***Mense*** *het springmielies hierbinne gemaak.*
'People have made popcorn in here.'

The third and final recurrent strategy is the indefinite pronoun *iemand*, which is attested in all non-universal-internal uses. Of the universal-external, existential-corporate and speech act verb cases, it generally does not make up a particularly large proportion, though (respectively 2.08%, 11.48% and 3.88%). The explanation probably lies in the fact that these uses involve a plural or collective interpretation. Nevertheless, a minority of the participants gives answers such as (37).

(37) a. *In Griekeland ry* ***iemand*** *nogal onvoorspelbaar.*
'In Greece, someone drives quite unpredictably.'
b. ***Iemand*** *het alweer die belasting verhoog.*
'Someone has raised the taxes again.'
c. ***Iemand*** *sê dat daardie huis wemel van die spoke.*
'Someone says that that house is crawling with ghosts.'

Number also seems to play some role in the other non-universal-internal uses. As mentioned earlier, Gast and van der Auwera (2013, p. 147) argue that indefinite pronouns like *iemand* cover the universal-internal-non-veridical-non-modal and existential-number-neutral uses on their map. It is therefore unsurprising that, in our data, existential-vague/inferred/specific-number-neutral contexts like (38) have the highest proportions of *iemand* (71.30%, 92.42% and 96.40% respectively).

(38) Afr ***Iemand*** *klop aan die deur.*
'Someone is knocking on the door.'

What does come as a surprise is the fairly common occurrence of this strategy in existential-plural contexts like (39). *Iemand* is always used less often than in the corresponding number-neutral uses and, of the existential-vague-plural cases (in which *hulle* is still quite frequent), it accounts for only 7.41%. However, in the existential-specific-plural use, the strategy makes up 32.37% of the cases and, in the existential-inferred-plural one, even 68.50%.

(39) a. Afr *Nadat hy uit gevangenis vrygelaat is, het* ***iemand*** *hom publiek gestenig*.
'After he was released from prison, they stoned him to death in public.'
b. Afr ***Iemand*** *het hier bymekaargekom vir 'n partytjie*.
'Someone has gathered here for a party.'

It is not entirely clear to us why *iemand* appears in such contexts. Possibly, some of the participants

who did not recognize *hulle* as an option – though perhaps the most obvious strategy, on the face of it – did not immediately see how they could complete sentences like (39) in a way that satisfied the instructions. They might then have fallen back on *iemand* as one of the most basic expressions of existential quantification in the language and reinterpreted the contexts for themselves as somehow number-neutral. This explanation is mere speculation, of course.

5 Discussion

5.1 Overall picture

Both the acceptability judgment task and the completion task show that the Afrikaans HIPs exhibit a clear division of labor. (*'n*) *Mens* and *jy* are the only ones able to occur in universal-internal uses. No other pronominal impersonalization strategy is found to be acceptable or to be used more than once in these contexts. *Hulle* is the sole HIP that can occur in non-universal-internal – i.e. universal-external, existential and speech act verb – uses. In our data, no other HIP has reasonable acceptability scores or is employed to complete the questionnaire items for these contexts. In other words, Afrikaans possesses no HIP that covers the entire impersonal domain. It differs in this respect from Dutch and German, arguably its closest relatives, and, more generally, from the core of the Standard Average European Sprachbund, including French (see Haspelmath 2001). As Giacalone Ramat and Sansò (2007, pp. 123-128) argue, in these languages, the 'man'-pronoun can express all universal and existential impersonal meanings (see Section 5.2). The division of labor attested in Afrikaans is far from unique, though. English, for instance, has lost its 'man'-pronoun and relies on *one* and *you* for universal-internal contexts and on *they* for non-universal-internal ones (see van der Auwera et al. 2012, p. 49). Furthermore, in many less central Standard Average European languages that still have a 'man'-pronoun, such as Icelandic and Polish, this HIP is restricted to universal-internal uses and the third person plural pronoun takes care of some, if not all, of the other ones (see Siewierska 2011, pp. 76-77).

The distinction between universal-internal and non-universal-internal contexts also manifests itself in the preference for a HIP as the impersonalization strategy. Despite the fact that the design of the completion task favors HIPs in a way (see Section 2.3), many participants opted for a strategy other than *hulle* in universal-external, existential and speech act verb uses. In the universal-internal ones, by contrast, (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* together make up nearly all cases. These results shed a new light on the findings of corpus research into HIPs (see Section 1.3): even if they can, in principle, convey every impersonal meaning, they are not employed non-universal-internally very often. The number of attestations of third person plural HIPs in particular has been shown to decrease substantially in languages from existential-corporate and -vague uses through speech act verb and universal-external ones to, finally, existential-inferred and -specific ones (see Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, pp. 590-592). Our data indicate that such observations should not be attributed to just a general infrequency of the expression of (certain types of) non-universal-internal impersonalization. Part of the explanation must lie in HIPs not being the preferred strategy in these contexts. In fact, the diminishing use of *hulle* in the completion task matches the cross-linguistic tendency of a decreasing number of corpus hits of third person plural HIPs quite well. The highest proportion of instances of *hulle* is found in the existential-corporate use. This use is followed by the speech act verb one and then by the existential-vague-plural one. The universal-external contexts come fourth while the existential-inferred and -specific ones have the lowest relative number of cases of *hulle*. These results also suggest that, in truly impersonal existential uses, the preference for a (third person plural) HIP is determined not only by (un)knownness but also by number (see Section 5.4).

In the rest of the present section, we examine our findings on (*'n*) *mens*, *jy* and *hulle* in more detail. Admittedly, these forms may not be the whole HIP story for Afrikaans. The occurrence of *man* and *een* in the completion task raises the question whether the language has a second 'man'-pronoun and/or a 'one'-pronoun. As pointed out earlier, the scholarship makes no mention of the forms. It is also hard to find any cases of them in the *Taalkommissiekorpus*, a substantial corpus of present-day writing compiled by the Language Commission for Afrikaans (Taalkommissie 2010). It is not impossible to get examples from the internet, however. In (40a), for instance, the indefinite noun *'n man* 'a man' seems to serve as a HIP in that, like (*'n*) *mens*, it is followed by the suppletive second person singular reflexive *jouself* 'yourself' (see Section 1.2). Its article-less and thus more grammaticalized variant can be attested too, as (40b) makes clear. Both sentences come from online short stories that appear to be authored by native speakers of Afrikaans.

(40) a. Afr ***'n Man*** *moet* ***jouself*** *kan bederf.* (http://oulitnet.co.za/fiksie/hwasser01.asp, accessed on 13 June 2017)
'One should be able to spoil oneself.'

b. Afr ***Man*** *moet* ***jouself*** *geestelik reg kry*. (www.woes.co.za/bydrae/druk/kortverhaal/die-groot-wind, accessed on 13 June 2017)
'One should sort oneself out mentally.'

The example of *een* in (41) is from a forum dedicated to – in its own words – the freedom of the Boers in contemporary South Africa. It is therefore not unlikely that this sentence is written by a native speaker of Afrikaans as well.

(41) Afr ***Een*** *moet jouself ook die vraag afvra: Wie is die Afrikaner?* (http://www.boerevryheid.co.za/forums/archive/index.php/t-26411.html, accessed on 13 June 2017)
'One should also ask oneself the question: who is the Afrikaner?'

Notwithstanding issues of reliability with internet data, (40) and (41) suggest that the use of *man* and *een* in the completion task is probably more than a fluke. Follow-up research could quite easily investigate the acceptability of (*'n*) *man* and *een* in the different impersonal contexts. It would also be interesting to examine whether this second 'man'-pronoun is perhaps typical of certain varieties of Afrikaans and whether the 'one'-pronoun results from language contact with English (see Section 4.2). We do not immediately see at this point how one would go about answering these questions, though.

5.2 (*'n*) *Mens*

The acceptability judgment task results show that (*'n*) *mens* is, in essence, a universal-internal HIP. Its scores for the universal-external use may still be relatively high but they are due to participants reading an internal point of view into the context when confronted with (*'n*) *mens* in the sentence (see Section 3.2). This explanation is supported by the fact that, when asked to complete universal-external contexts, people hardly ever use (*'n*) *mens*. In the same vein, the absence of the HIP from the existential-number-neutral uses in the completion task confirms that the higher acceptability of *'n mens* in such contexts can be attributed to its interpretation not as a HIP but as an indefinite noun phrase.

As a universal-internal HIP, (*'n*) *mens* differs from the 'man'-pronouns in German and Dutch (and other central Standard Average European languages, see Siewierska 2011, p. 71). The latter

can occur not only in universal-internal contexts such as (42a) but also in universal-external, existential and speech act verb ones like (42b) to (42d) respectively (see Gast and van der Auwera 2013, pp. 143-144, 149).

(42) a. Dut ***Men*** *leeft maar een keer.*
'One only lives once.'
b. Ger *In Griechenland fährt* ***man*** *eher unberechenbar*. (Brandt p.c.)
'In Greece, they drive quite unpredictably.'
c. Dut ***Men*** *klopt op de deur.*
'They are knocking on the door.'
d. Ger ***Man*** *sagt, dass Avokados viele Vitamine enthalten.* (Brandt p.c.)
'They say that avocados are extremely rich in vitamins.'

The fully grammaticalized 'man'-pronouns in German and Dutch (e.g. the lack of articles and the possible phonetic reduction of *men* to [mən]) have, in other words, developed further semantically than their grammaticalizing Afrikaans counterpart. In terms of Giacalone Ramat and Sansò's (2007, p. 106) grammaticalization path in Figure 6, *man* and *men* can be described as having evolved into a human referential indefinite and (*'n*) *mens* as being restricted to a human non-referential indefinite meaning.[8]

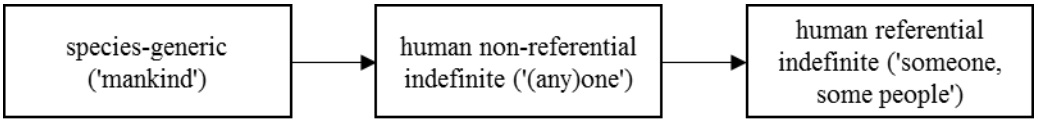

Figure 6: Giacalone Ramat and Sansò's (2007) grammaticalization path of 'man'-pronouns.

(Non-)referentiality is not the only dissimilarity between these 'man'-pronouns, though. They differ in the so-called species-generic use too. Kirsten (2016, p. 191) points out that, as (43) shows, *'n mens* can still have its original meaning of 'man(kind)', unlike *man* and *men*.

(43) Afr *Hier sien ons wat* ***'n mens/*mens*** *kan doen als hy wil.*
'Here, we see what man can do if he wants to.'

Interestingly, (43) also points out that *mens* does not share this use with *'n mens* (see Van Olmen et al. in press). The article-less and more grammaticalized form can thus no longer occur in the contexts that have given rise to the HIP and is truly dedicated to the expression of (universal-internal) impersonalization.

It is tempting to link the functional differences between the aforementioned 'man'-pronouns to their degrees of formal grammaticalization. In (*'n*) *mens*, with its optional article, the process of

[8] Figure 6 does not show Giacalone Ramat and Sansò's (2007) grammaticalization path of 'man'-pronouns in its entirety. Human non-referential indefinites can actually develop not only into human referential indefinites but also into human specific definites. The first person plural meaning of French *on* 'one, they, we' is a case in point. This part of the path is left out here because the focus of the present study is on impersonal or, put differently, indefinite uses and our data cannot tell us anything about the human specific definite use. Note, however, that, in Van Olmen et al. (in press), (*'n*) *mens* is argued to lack a conventionalized first person meaning but that, like *men* (and probably *man*), it can occasionally be interpreted in such a way pragmatically.

grammaticalization has not reached its end-point yet and, functionally, the HIP is limited to universal-internal uses. *Man* and *men*, by contrast, are fully grammaticalized from a formal point of view and can appear in universal-external, existential and speech act verb contexts too. Languages like Icelandic and Frisian make clear, however, that fully grammaticalized 'man'-pronouns need not be as multifunctional as the ones in German and Dutch. Icelandic *maður* and Frisian *men* (see Egerland 2003 and Hoekstra 2010 respectively) are unambiguous pronouns dedicated to conveying impersonalization but they can only function as human non-referential indefinites.[9] Another potentially alluring idea is that the universal-internal-only nature of (*'n*) *mens* is somehow connected to its reliance on second person singular suppletive forms (see Section 1.2). Second person singular HIPs are known to be restricted to universal-internal uses after all (see Section 5.3). Yet, it is evident from a quick look at German that no such connection exists. Like (*'n*) *mens*, *man* possesses suppletive object forms but they are provided by 'one', as in (44a), rather than by the second person singular, as in (44b). Importantly, HIPs derived from 'one' tend to serve universal-internal purposes only too (e.g. Gast and van der Auwera 2013, pp. 145-146). *Einen* is no exception. The existential reading in (44c), for instance, is unacceptable. *Man* itself can, of course, still receive such an interpretation – with the proviso that no suppletive forms of 'one' are present.

(44) a. Ger ***Man*** *weiß ja nie, was die* ***einen*** *fragen.* (Draye 2014, p. 242)
'You never know what they will ask you.'
b. Afr ***Mens*** *weet nooit regtig wat hulle* ***jou*** *gaan vra nie*.
'You never know what they will ask you.'
c. Ger **Ich habe* ***einen*** *auf/an der Strasse arbeiten hören*. (Fenger 2016, p. 9)
'I heard someone work on the road.'

In fact, as Cabredo Hofherr (2010, p. 20) points outs, this constraint on the use of suppletion affects *man*'s third person singular masculine possessive and reflexive forms too. *Sein* is perfectly fine in a universal-internal context like (10b), repeated here as (45a), but blocks the existential reading of *man* in (45b).

(45) a. Ger ***Man*** *kann* ***sein*** *Auto hier nicht parken.* (Cabredo Hohferr 2010, p. 7)
'One cannot park one's car here.'
b. Ger **Heute morgen hat* ***man seine*** *Adresse für dich hinterlassen.* (Cabredo Hohferr 2010, p. 10)
'This morning, someone left their address for you.'

In sum, German indicates that suppletive forms play no role in the functional evolution of a 'man'-pronoun. The fact that (*'n*) *mens* has not (yet?) developed beyond the universal-internal use should therefore not be linked to its dependence on the second person singular for suppletion.

It is clear from the previous paragraphs that Afrikaans differs from its closest Germanic relatives in the functional potential of their 'man'-pronouns. Our completion task results suggest that the language also contrasts with in particular Dutch in regard to the frequency of use of the 'man'-

[9] The forms of the 'man'-pronouns in Icelandic, Frisian, German and Dutch exhibit a similar level of grammaticalization. They do not behave the same way syntactically, though. *Maður*, for instance, can serve as the object of a sentence (see Egerland 2003, p. 91). *Man*, by contrast, cannot (see Draye 2014, p. 142). The differences appear to be related to the stage that the 'man'-pronoun has reached in its functional evolution. We refer to Fenger (2016) for an in-depth analysis of the (dis)similarities between the 'man'-pronouns in Germanic and to Van Olmen et al. (in press) for a discussion of (*'n*) *mens* from a morphosyntactic point of view.

pronouns. Ideally, any claim about differences in usage should be based on similar data, i.e. another completion task questionnaire for Dutch. In the absence of this type of information (so far), we rely on the converging and convincing evidence in the literature that *men* is very infrequent (see Coussé and van der Auwera 2012, p. 125 and van der Auwera et al. 2012, p. 57) and that it is restricted to formal registers (see Weerman 2006, p. 31). Many a scholar actually believes that it is on its way out (e.g. Duinhoven 1990). The same cannot be said for (*'n*) *mens*. The proportion of cases that is made up by this HIP in the three universal-internal uses in the completion task averages around 80.31%. It is also important to remember here that the questionnaire items were kept as informal and conversational as possible (see Section 2.2). Hence, it seems safe to conclude that, unlike *men*, (*'n*) *mens* is flourishing. The comparison with German is harder to draw, on the basis of the existing literature. Van der Auwera et al.'s (2012, p. 57) exploratory corpus study suggests that *man* is ubiquitous. In the same vein, Gast (2015, p. 8) writes that it 'epitomizes impersonalization'. More research (e.g. a completion task questionnaire for German) is needed, though, to determine whether these observations mean that *man* is used more often than or equally frequently as (*'n*) *mens* in universal-internal contexts.

The results of the completion task are also of interest for the last issue to be discussed in this section: the relationship between *'n mens* and *mens*. As HIPs, both forms can occur in exactly the same uses. The former is, however, consistently regarded as more acceptable than the latter (see Section 3.2). In other words, the participants of our acceptability judgment task seem to have some reservations about the more grammaticalized variant. Somewhat surprisingly, this reluctance is not found among the participants of the completion task, whose overall profile is almost identical (see Sections 3.1 and 4.1). *Mens* is employed at least three times more often than *'n mens* in the universal-internal contexts (see Section 4.2). It is tempting to attribute this discrepancy to some prescriptivist aversion to the article-less variant. However, Kirsten (2016, p. 192) surveys the normative literature on Afrikaans and concludes that, while some sources explicitly object to *mens* and others only mention *'n mens*, the majority accepts both forms. Her study of a corpus of written language from 1911 to 2010 does reveal that *'n mens* is much more frequent than *mens* in this mode (though the latter is shown to have gained some ground over time, particularly in unpublished material; see Kirsten 2016, p. 193 and Van Olmen et al. in press). She conjectures that this result is due to the fact that writing is simply more conservative than speech, where the article-less variant would be more common. This hypothesis may explain our results as well. In the acceptability judgment task, when faced with both *'n mens* and *mens* in writing at the same time (see Section 2.2 for the questionnaire design), participants rate the original form higher than the newer one. The completion task, however, does not prompt either form. In that case, the participants, who are encouraged to give answers that are as close to their conversational speech as possible (see Section 2.3), can be assumed to be more inclined to opt for the variant that they employ in everyday spoken language. The results thus reveal that the use of more grammaticalized *mens* is indeed much more widespread than any corpus study would suggest.

5.3 *Jy*

Both the acceptability judgment task and the completion task show that *jy*, like (*'n*) *mens*, is limited to universal-internal uses. As mentioned before, this restriction is typical of second person singular HIPs across languages (e.g. Siewierska 2004, p. 212, Gast and van der Auwera 2013, pp. 146-147), which can be linked directly to their personal use. As Deringer et al. (2015, p. 332) point out, the addressee continues to be present in the impersonal use of second person singular forms: 'The

speaker interpersonally presupposes that the addressee either empathizes with, or is willing to empathize with, the target of empathy.' Put differently, because of the intrinsic involvement of the addressee in *jy*, the pronoun can only convey an internal perspective as a HIP (see also Gast et al. 2015 for a pragmatic analysis unifying the personal and impersonal uses of the second person singular).

As regards the actual usage of *jy*, the completion task results suggest that the cross-linguistically common tendency to replace other universal-internal HIPs by the second person singular (e.g. Los 2002 on English, Weerman 2006 and De Hoop and Tarenskeen 2015 on Dutch and Jensen 2009 on Danish) is not so strong in Afrikaans. Despite being as acceptable as *'n mens* and significantly more acceptable than *mens*, *jy* is not used very often. Its occurrence in the three universal-internal contexts averages around a mere 14.42% (versus 18.06% for *'n mens* and 62.27% for *mens*). This finding contradicts Kirsten's (2016, p. 199) claim that the second person singular vastly outnumbers (*'n*) *mens* as a HIP in her corpus. There are at least three possible reasons for the difference, in our view. First, it may reflect an actual difference between writing and the type of language elicited in the completion task. Perhaps, our contexts simply do not match the pragmatics of a second person singular HIP very well.[10] Second, it is unclear whether her figures also contain cases of the object form *jou* serving a suppletive function for (*'n*) *mens*. The number of instances of the second person singular might thus be somewhat inflated. Third, her count could include numerous cases of *jy* that we would not analyze as HIPs. Kirsten (2016, p. 194) writes, for instance, that the use of the second person singular to address the reader directly is regarded as generic in her study. We, by contrast, would consider it a personal rather than an impersonal use.

At any rate, more research is obviously needed to determine what really motivates the choice between *jy* and (*'n*) *mens* (à la Fernández 2013 and Jensen and Gregersen 2016). Still, on the whole, according to our data, Afrikaans can be said to side more with German usage-wise than with the other two main West Germanic languages. The evidence for this claim comes from van der Auwera et al.'s (2012, p. 57) parallel corpus study, which reveals that 'English uses 'you' quite a bit, Dutch uses it almost twice as often, but German uses it very sparingly'. The second person HIP has a competitor in the universal-internal domain in all four languages. In English and Dutch, *you* and *je* are not really challenged by the infrequent HIPs *one* and *men*. In German and Afrikaans, however, *du* 'you' and *jy* appear to be marginalized by the seemingly ubiquitous 'man'-pronouns *man* and (*'n*) *mens*.

5.4 *Hulle*

Both the acceptability judgment task and the completion task show that *hulle* is the only possible HIP in Afrikaans for non-universal-internal contexts. There is considerable variation between the uses, though. The former questionnaire reveals that the HIP scores highest for acceptability in the universal-internal, existential-corporate and speech act verb uses (see Section 3.3). Although Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 599) acceptability judgment task has a somewhat different design (see Section 2.2), our findings confirm their cross-linguistic observation that 'there is an overall speaker preference for semi-impersonal uses of the 3pl as compared to its full impersonal uses'. The personal character of *hulle* – like that of its West Germanic counterparts (see Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 596) – thus seems to persist in its impersonal use to some extent. Our data also

[10] An initial analysis of the questionnaire data that we have collected for English and Dutch in the meantime suggests, however, that the contexts are open to second person singular HIPs. *You* accounts for 76% of the English data and *jij* 'you' for 89% of the Dutch data.

suggests that this overall speaker preference should be extended to the speech act verb use (which is not taken into account in Siewierska and Papastathi's 2011 acceptability judgment task).

All in all, these conclusions are corroborated by the results of our completion task. In actual usage too, *hulle* is strongest in existential-corporate, speech act verb and universal-internal contexts, as well as in existential-vague-plural ones (see Section 4.3). Interestingly, of these four main uses, the existential-corporate use is the most frequent one and the universal-internal use the least frequent one in Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 592) parallel corpus study of third person plural HIPs. The distribution is found in, inter alia, Dutch and English. In our data, the former context has the highest number of cases of *hulle* and the latter one the lowest. Afrikaans appears to conform to this cross-linguistic trend too, in other words. The tendency for the existential-vague use to be more common in a corpus than the speech act verb use, however, is not reflected in our completion task results. The proportion of answers made up by *hulle* in speech act verb contexts is higher (but not significantly so) than that in existential-vague contexts. We should obviously be careful about comparing the findings of two studies taking different approaches but this potential dissimilarity merits closer investigation in future research. In the same vein, we should to be cautious in evaluating, on the basis of our data, Kirsten's (2016, p. 195) corpus finding that *hulle* hardly ever occurs as a HIP in written Afrikaans (see Section 1.2). Still, its overall frequency in the completion task suggests that it is more frequent than claimed.

Let us now turn to the truly impersonal uses. In the acceptability judgment task, *hulle* is found to be significantly less acceptable in existential-inferred/specific-number-neutral contexts than in their plural counterparts. The HIP is also shown to score substantially lower for acceptability in the existential-specific-number-neutral use than in the existential-vague-number-neutral one (see Section 3.3). These results can be said to be in keeping with the existing semantic maps of HIPs (see Section 1.1). Gast and van der Auwera (2013) claim that languages can have HIPs with an existential-plural use and no existential-number-neutral one but not vice versa. The drops in acceptability here follow this directionality. Under the assumption that Gast and van der Auwera's (2013, p. 149) intuitions about West Germanic are largely right (but see Section 1.1), they also suggest that Afrikaans sides more with Dutch and German than with English: *ze* and *sie* have been argued to be restricted to plural contexts, *they* to tolerate number-neutral ones as well. Similarly, Siewierska and Papastathi (2011) predict that, across languages, third person plural HIPs can exhibit existential-vague uses without allowing existential-inferred and/or existential-specific ones but not the other way around. This directionality too is respected by the decrease in acceptability in the present study. Note also that *hulle*'s lower acceptability in existential-specific-number-neutral contexts seems to be in line with the judgments for West Germanic in Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 598): 'The specific existential 3pl IMP [i.e. impersonal] is at best marginal in Dutch, English [and] German.' The comparison is, of course, not unproblematic because our research combines Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) dimension of (un)knownness with Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) dimension of number. In fact, the results of our acceptability judgment task indicate that the dimensions interact with one another.

The interaction of the two dimensions is even more evident from our completion task. The proportion of cases made up by *hulle* decreases significantly from plural to number-neutral uses in existential-vague and -specific contexts, as well as from existential-vague to -inferred and -specific uses in plural and number-neutral contexts (see Section 4.3). Importantly, the very low numbers in the existential-inferred and existential-specific-number-neutral uses in particular echo Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 590) finding that 'there are no instances of either the inferred or the specific existential' in their parallel corpus. This lack of attestations is, in essence, attributed to the

infrequency with which people are expected to express this kind of impersonalization, as Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 590) argument below shows.

> Recall that in the case of both type[s] of 3pl IMPs the identity of the referent of the subject resides in the situational context rather than the 3pl construction. The situational context is manifest to the speaker and not to the hearer, let alone the reader. One may therefore well imagine that in written texts verbal contexts are much more likely to underlie 3pl IMPs uses than situational ones.

Yet, even in the items in our questionnaire, where the situation is described as accurately as possible, *hulle* is hardly ever used. This fact indicates that at least part of the explanation also lies in a disinclination to employ (third person plural) HIPs for existential-inferred and -specific impersonalization (see Section 5.1 and Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 602 for a similar point).

In view of the preceding paragraphs, the reader might wonder why number and (un)knownness would be relevant for the acceptability and usage of *hulle* and of (third person plural) HIPs in general in the first place. The reason why Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) dimension plays a role is fairly straightforward: as a personal pronoun, *hulle* has a plural meaning. It is not unreasonable to assume that this feature can persist in its impersonal use. Thus, for certain speakers/languages, including Afrikaans, the link to the original plurality of 'they' is probably still too strong to (fully) embrace its use as a HIP in number-neutral contexts. In a language like English (as analyzed by Gast and van der Auwera 2013, p. 145), by contrast, *they* appears to have undergone further semantic bleaching and to have lost its necessary sense of plurality.[11] It is important to note here that third person plural HIPs are not the only impersonalization strategy affected by number. As suggested by Section 4.3, the use of 'someone', for instance, is more typical of number-neutral contexts and that of 'people' of plural ones. 'Man'-pronouns that have non-universal-internal uses, however, do not seem to be sensitive to number (see Gast and van der Auwera 2013, p. 149 on Dutch, French and German). We also cannot see any obvious reason why they would be. As Giacalone Ramat and Sansò (2007, p. 107) point out, already in its initial HIP stage, a 'man'-pronoun can refer 'to a plural entity (*people in general*, *people in a given spatio-temporal setting*)' or 'a singular given the appropriate hypothetic/irrealis context (*a person in a given situation*)'. Still, only a study similar to the present one that looks at, for instance, *men* or *man* can truly confirm these intuitions.

In Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011, p. 605) view, the factor underlying (un)knownness is referent identification and 'languages differ with respect to their tolerance of 3pl IMPs in' different types of referent identification. To be more precise, the universal-external and existential-corporate and -vague uses are said to involve a decreasing level of 'overt referent identification as expressed within the construction' (Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 584). The locative phrase in a universal-external context is probably the clearest pointer toward the possible set of referents. In existential-corporate contexts, identification relies on the predicate and, in existential-vague ones, 'no or virtually no clue to identification [is] provided' (Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 584) (see also Section 1.1). In Afrikaans, the acceptability of *hulle* decreases (but not significantly so) with lower degrees of overt referent identification. Of all uses, the three uses at issue, together with the speech act verb one, still feature the HIP's highest acceptability scores, though (see Section 3.1). In terms

[11] Its alleged acceptability in number-neutral contexts may, in a way, be related to its gender-neutral singular use. In *the client should be told beforehand how much they will have to pay*, for example, the personal pronoun is not plural anymore either.

of the usage of *hulle* too (see Section 4.1), they outperform all the other uses. Their internal variation does not really align with their levels of overt referent identification, however: the existential-corporate use has a significantly higher proportion of cases of the HIP than the universal-external and existential-vague ones. Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that, on the whole, *hulle* is tolerated quite well in all these contexts.

The same cannot be said of existential-inferred and -specific contexts, particularly as regards the use of *hulle* (see Section 3.3 and 4.3). According to Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 584), these two uses differ from the other ones not in the 'degree of overt referent identification' but in 'the purely situational as opposed to verbal nature of the referent identification'. In existential-inferred contexts, there is typically some perceptual stimulus in the situation (e.g. a smell) that makes the speaker infer the existence of a (set of) individual(s) whom he or she sees as having produced the stimulus somehow. In the existential-specific use, 'the situational context appears to involve some form of contact of the speaker with the referent of the subject, for example, visual (at the door, on TV), audio (on the phone, radio), written (via an e-mail or letter) etc.' (Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 584). In either context, the use of a third person plural pronoun can be argued to be further away from its prototypical definite semantics than in the contexts discussed in the preceding paragraph and the universal-external and existential-corporate ones in particular (see Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 600). The fact that such a radical departure from the original personal pronoun meaning is required may explain why certain speakers/languages, including Afrikaans, are reluctant to accept and/or employ a third person plural HIP in existential-inferred and -specific uses. Note that this account does not really apply to non-universal-internal 'man'-pronouns in any straightforward way. We would therefore expect them to be less sensitive to the dimension of (un)knownness. It is left for future research here to examine whether they are or not.

The entire discussion in the present section suggests that, at least for the non-universal-internal uses and third person plural HIPs, the existing semantic maps may need to be merged. In Figure 7, an attempt is made at such a combined map. It is meant to be read as follows. If 'they' exhibits a use *on* the main axis (i.e. the one linking 'known (anaphoric)' to EXI-VAG-NN), it is expected to have the use(s) higher up on the main axis too. EXI-VAG-PL, for instance, would assume the existence of EXI-COR, UNI-EXT and 'known (anaphoric)' but not that of SAV or any of the other uses. In addition, if 'they' can occur in a use *off* the main axis, it is predicted to display the adjacent use on the main axis and any use higher up on the relevant vertical side axis. EXI-INF-NN would, in other words, presuppose the presence of EXI-VAG-NN (and, hence, all other uses on the main axis) and EXI-INF-PL.

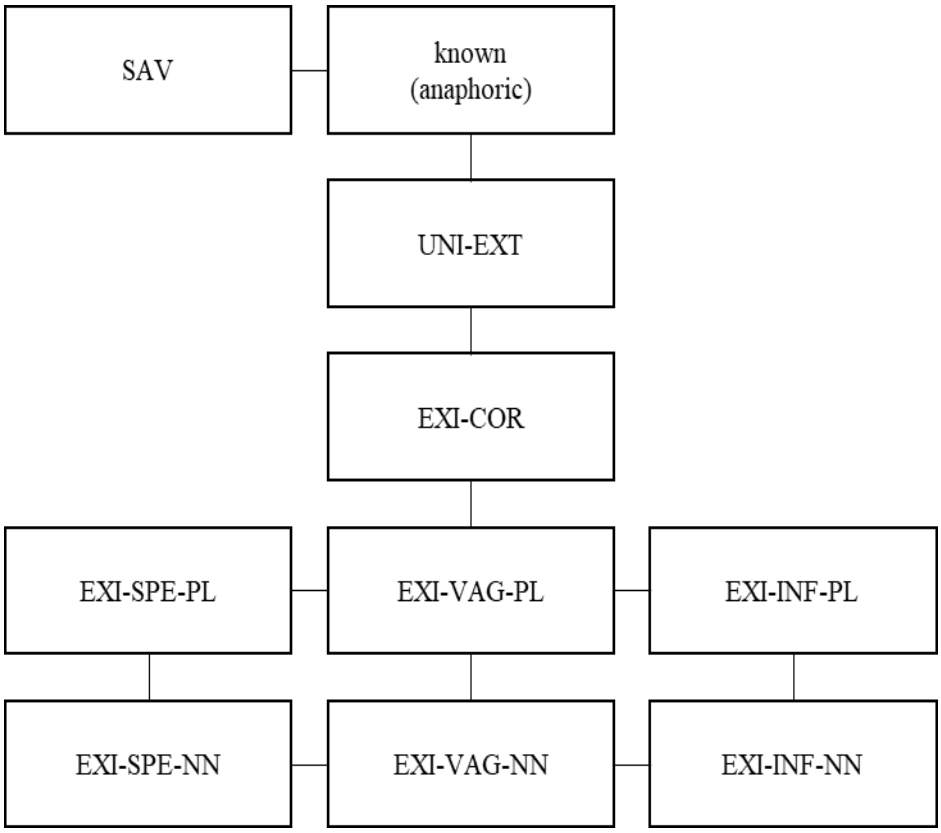

Figure 7: A combined semantic map of third person plural HIPs.

Before we see how Figure 7 works for *hulle*, let us explain its design. First, we follow Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 605) in regarding the speech act verb use as a direct off-shoot of the personal pronoun use. As mentioned before (see Section 1.1), this decision is motivated by the existence of languages in which 'they' has no (semi-)impersonal uses but can occur with speech act verbs (e.g. Finnish). Second, many languages exhibit a clear preference for universal-internal and existential-corporate uses of their third person plural HIPs to any other existential use (see Siewierska and Papastathi 2011, p. 603). In fact, the former are functionally closer to the personal pronoun use than the latter in that they are just semi-impersonal. Interestingly, Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 604) admit that 'since all the languages which have universal 3pl IMPs also have corporate ones and there are no significant differences between the two in terms of speaker acceptability judgments either within or across languages, it is not clear how the two should be linked to the anaphoric use of the 3pl or to each other.' They choose to keep them separate and to connect the universal-external use to the personal pronoun one. Their rationale is, in essence, that it has a higher level of overt referent identification and is therefore more similar to the personal pronoun use than the existential-corporate one. Supporting evidence for distinguishing the two semi-impersonal contexts comes from an impersonalization strategy discussed by Gast and van der Auwera (2013, pp. 145-146): the reflexive in Spanish and Italian can fulfill all universal uses, including the universal-external one, but not the existential-corporate one. Third, we again follow Siewierska and Papastathi (2011, p. 605) in assuming that there are indeed languages with semi-impersonal and existential-vague uses only (e.g. French) as well as languages with semi-impersonal, existential-vague and either existential-inferred or existential-specific uses (e.g. Syrian Arabic). Such languages motivate the link between the existential-vague and -corporate uses and the analysis of the

existential-inferred and -specific uses as distinct off-shoots of the existential-vague one. The difference with Siewierska and Papastathi's (2011) map is that the dimension of number is incorporated here. In keeping with Gast and van der Auwera's (2013) map, for each use, the plural variant is more closely connected to the existential-corporate use than the number-neutral one.

In Figures 8 and 9, *hulle* is represented on the combined map as it appears in our data. More specifically, Figure 8 provides its score in the acceptability judgment task for each use and Figure 9 the proportion that it accounts for in the completion task. The different shades of grey in the two figures reflect the (dis)similarities between the uses in *hulle*'s level of acceptability or usage.

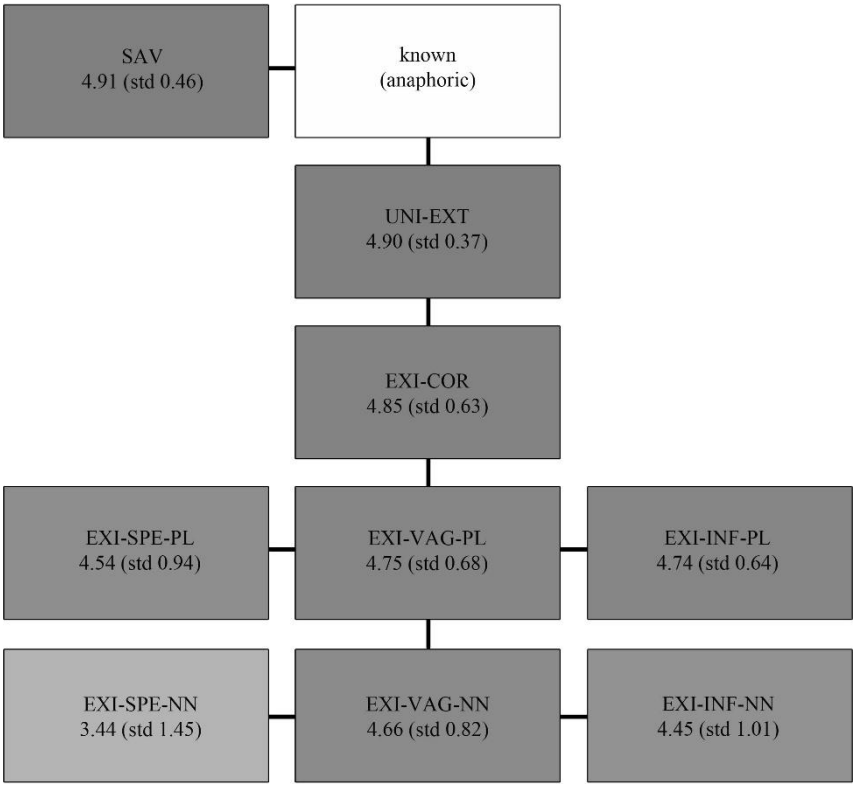

Figure 8: *Hulle* in the acceptability judgment task on a combined semantic map of third person plural HIPs.

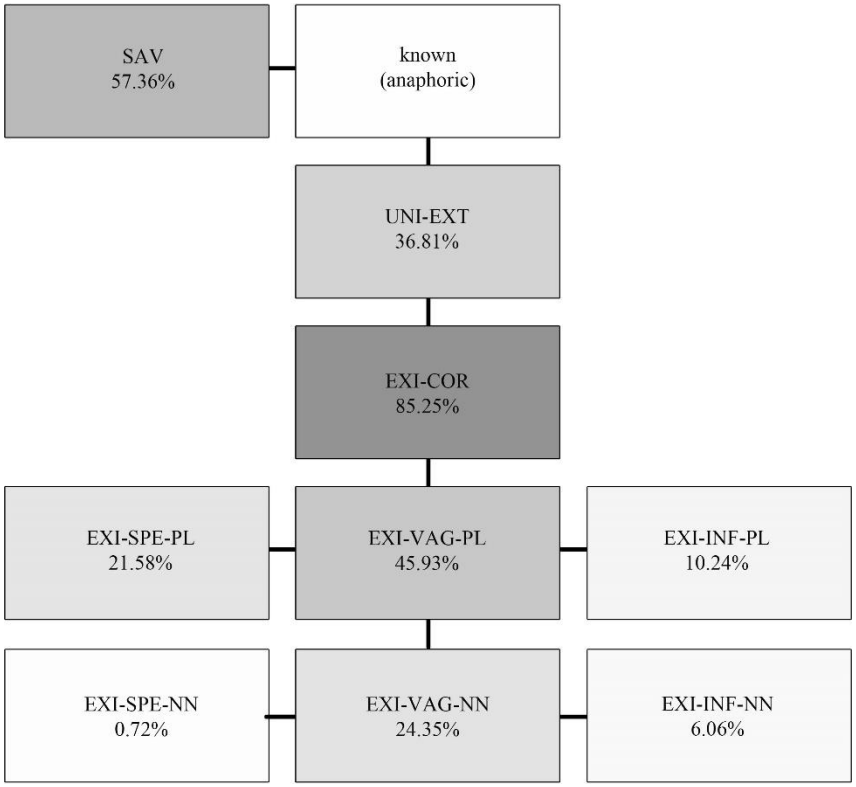

Figure 9: *Hulle* in the completion task on a combined semantic map of third person plural HIPs.

All in all, *hulle* appears to respect the "logic" of the map quite well. Though few of the differences in acceptability are statistically significant, it is worthy of note that no use has a higher score than any use topping it on the same vertical axis (e.g. EXI-VAG-NN versus EXI-COR) or any use adjacent to it on the main axis (e.g. EXI-SPE-PL versus EXI-VAG-PL). As far as the completion task is concerned, the results for the semi-impersonal and speech act verb domain are somewhat mixed. In the truly impersonal domain, however, the uses on the main axis clearly outdo their neighboring uses on the side axes (e.g. EXI-VAG-PL versus EXI-INF-PL). The same holds for the three uses on the higher horizontal axis as opposed to the three on the lower horizontal axis (e.g. EXI-SPE-PL versus EXI-SPE-NN). A quick look at all the numbers here also makes clear that, at least for *hulle*, the distinctions on the map are of a gradual rather than a discrete nature. It will be not only interesting but also necessary to examine, in future research, whether the map works in the same way for other third person plural HIPs and, perhaps, other non-universal-internal HIPs.

6 Conclusion

To conclude this paper, let us briefly address the questions posed in Section 1.4 and start with the three more theoretical ones. The answer to the first question, i.e. whether number à la Gast and van der Auwera (2013) is a significant dimension for genuinely impersonal existential HIPs, is positive. *Hulle* scores substantially lower for acceptability in certain number-neutral contexts than in their plural counterparts. The differences between the two types of context are even more outspoken in the completion task's usage data on the third person plural HIP. The second question, which concerns the potential interaction of number with the dimension of (un)knownness à la Siewierska and Papastathi (2011), can be answered in the affirmative too. Both questionnaires and especially the

completion task indicate that *hulle* is more problematic in the existential-inferred and -specific uses than the existential-vague ones and that, in at least two of these uses, it is also affected by number. These findings raise two important issues. On the one hand, they suggest that the distinctions along both dimensions may need to be regarded not as discrete but as gradual. On the other, they hint at the possibility of a combined semantic map for the non-universal-internal domain. Future research will have to examine if and to what extent this map can capture the behavior of (third person plural) HIPs in other languages as well. Our third more general question asks whether any (dis)similarities in preference for HIPs as an impersonalization strategy exist between various impersonal uses. The answer appears to be yes, once more. In the completion task, HIPs are heavily favored in universal-internal contexts. In the non-universal-internal uses and especially the truly impersonal existential ones, by contrast, strategies like '(the) people' and 'someone' are preferred. It remains to be seen, of course, whether this pattern extends to other languages. But if Afrikaans is representative, the infrequency of existentially used HIPs attested in corpora of many a language can be explained at least partially by the fact that speakers simply favor other strategies for this type of impersonalization.

Let us now turn to the more descriptive questions raised in Section 1.4. The first one has to do with the functional potential of the three main HIPs in Afrikaans. It is clear from our data that the language exhibits a division of labor between (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* on the one hand and *hulle* on the other. The former are restricted to universal-internal uses while the latter can only occur in universal-external, existential and speech act verb contexts. English can testify to the fact that such a split is not unusual. Yet, it sets Afrikaans apart from German and Dutch, whose 'man'-pronouns have developed further and cover all impersonal uses. The second question concerns the actual usage of the HIPs. The answer is found in the results of the completion task. They suggest that there are no real differences in the use of (*'n*) *mens* and *jy* between the universal-internal uses. Despite its high acceptability, *jy* is consistently employed much less often than its competitor. In this respect, Afrikaans seems to be more like German and less like Dutch and English. The results also reveal that *hulle* appears most frequently in the semi-impersonal, existential-vague and speech act verb uses and that its use decreases dramatically from plural to number-neutral contexts and from existential-vague to existential-inferred and -specific ones. It is, in other words, roughly in line with the cross-linguistic tendencies of third person plural HIPs established by Siewierska and Papastathi (2011). The third and final question is about the relationship between *'n mens* and *mens*. As HIPs, the two forms can serve exactly the same universal-internal purposes. However, *'n mens* is judged significantly more acceptable than *mens*, which probably reflects a preference for the former in writing. Yet, in actual use, more grammaticalized *mens* is much more common than less grammaticalized *'n mens*.

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Appendix

Abbreviation	Use	Example
UNI-INT-NVER-NMOD	universal-internal use in a non-veridical non-modal clause	*As … na Engeland toe gaan, is dit noodsakelik om 'n reënjas in te pak.* 'If one goes to England, it is necessary to pack a raincoat.'
UNI-INT-NVER-MOD	universal-internal use in a non-veridical modal clause	*… kan nie 'n taal in ses weke leer nie.* 'One cannot learn a language in six weeks.'
UNI-INT-VER	universal-internal use in a veridical clause	*... leef net een keer.* 'One only lives once.'
SAV	speech act verb use	*… sê 'n avo het baie vitamine.* 'They say that an avocado has a lot of vitamins.'
UNI-EXT	universal-external use	*In Griekeland ry … nogal onvoorspelbaar.* 'In Greece, they drive quite unpredictably.'
EXI-COR	existential corporate use	*… het nou spoedlokvalle hier opgesit.* 'They have installed speed cameras here.'
EXI-VAG-PL	existential vague plural use	*Nadat hy uit gevangenis vrygelaat is, het … hom publiek gestenig.* 'After he was released from prison, they stoned him to death in public.'
EXI-VAG-NN	existential vague number-neutral use	*… het jou sak in die park gekry.* 'They have found your bag in the park.'
EXI-INF-PL	existential inferred plural use	*… het hier bymekaargekom vir 'n partytjie.* 'They have gathered here for a party.' [I can tell from the empty beer cans on the ground.]
EXI-INF-NN	existential inferred number-neutral use	*… het springmielies hierbinne gemaak.* 'They have made popcorn in here.' [I can smell it.]
EXI-SPE-PL	existential specific plural use	*… bel jou op altwee jou fone.* 'They are calling you on both of your phones.'
EXI-SPE-NN	existential specific number-neutral use	*… klop aan die deur.* 'They are knocking on the door.'