

## ON THE USE OF “GERAL” AS AN IMPERSONAL PRONOUN IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

Juanito Ornelas de Avelar  
Stockholm University

This study presents a descriptive analysis on the use of *geral* ‘general’ as an impersonal pronoun in Brazilian Portuguese. *Geral* is intrinsically an adjective, but it has been used as a pronoun in both subject (cf. 1) and object (cf. 2) position. *Geral*<sub>OBJ</sub> can be +HUMAN and -HUMAN, but *geral*<sub>SUB</sub> can be only +HUMAN. The emergence of *geral*<sub>SUB</sub> seems to be recent, in contrast with *geral*<sub>OBJ</sub>, whose use is well consolidated in different Brazilian Portuguese varieties. At first glance, *geral*<sub>SUB</sub> is more common among speakers under about 40 years old in urban areas along Rio-São Paulo axis, in contrast with *geral*<sub>OBJ</sub>, which is used by speakers of different age ranges from different regions. The use of *geral* as a referentially indeterminate pronoun probably results from its frequent cooccurrences with collective or impersonal names (as *publico* ‘the public’ and *pessoas* ‘persons’), in phrases introduced by the preposition *em* ‘in’ (cf. 3). The descriptive analysis will be based on data collected from written material published in Brazilian blogs, mostly informal texts in open public forums.

- (1) “**Geral** sabe que isso é só consequência lógica da falta de interesse”  
general knows that that is only consequence logic of-the absence of interest  
‘Everyone knows that it is just a natural consequence of a lack of interest’

<https://medium.com/revistaokoto/da-amizade-entre-negros-e-brancos-ii-66fce4a0d339>

- (2) “Ele é um fofo que protege **geral** na escola”  
he is a nice.guy that protects general in-the school  
‘He is a kind guy, who protects everyone at the school’

<http://abracadabradiario.blogspot.com/2011/06/060611.html>

- (3) “as pessoas *em geral* gostam de fazer festas”  
the people in general like of to-do parties  
‘Everyone likes to organize parties’

<https://www.terra.com.br/vida-e-estilo/horoscopo/feng-shui/feng-shui-saiba-a-energia-da-sua-casa-pelo-numero-na-porta,a24a20bbeb2fa410VgnVCM4000009bcceb0aRCRD.html>