

LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE

**BAKALaura DARBS**

RĪGA 2015

UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**TOPIC-DEPENDENT USE OF PASSIVE IN  
ENGLISH CORPORA**

**NO TĒMAS ATKARĪGS CIEŠAMĀS KĀRTAS  
LIETOJUMS ANĢĻU VALODAS KORPUSOS**

BACHELOR THESIS

**Elīna Freimane**

Matriculation card No. ef11009

Adviser: asoc. prof. Natalja Cigankova

RĪGA 2015

## Anotācija

Ir zināms, ka ciešamā kārtā tiek bieži vien pielietota lietišķajā stilā, bet tā nav tik bieži sastopama mutvārdu saziņā, bet vai ciešamās kārtas lietojums var atšķirties atkarībā no tēmas? Bakalaura darbā tika analizēts ciešamās kārtas lietojums atkarībā no tēmas, balstoties uz materiāliem, kas var tikt atrodami korpusos. Darba hipotēze ir tāda, dažādos tematos ciešamās kārtas lietojums atšķiras. Lai pārbaudītu izvirzīto hipotēzi un sasniegtu izvirzīto pētījuma mērķi, tika izpētīti rakstītie avoti un agrāk veikti pētījumi par ciešamo kārtu un tās lietojumu. Pētījuma praktiskajai daļai tika izvēlēti pieci darbības vārdi un tie tika sameklēti trīs dažādos angļu valodas korpusos, izmantojot tiešsaistes programmu *Compleat Lexical Tutor* un tika atlasīti un izpētīti programmas uzrādītie piemēri no korpusiem un tika aplūkota tēma, kādā ir tikusi pielietota ciešamā kārtā un kādus piemērus uzrāda katrs no izvēlētajiem angļu valodas tekstu korpusiem. Lai gan daudzi faktori var noteikt ciešamās kārtas izvēli un lietojumu, pētījuma rezultāti liek secināt, ka arī dotais temats var ietekmēt ciešamās kārtas lietojumu.

**Atslēgvārdi:** ciešamā kārtā, angļu valodas ciešamā kārtā, ciešamās kārtas lietojums, no tēmas atkarīgs lietojums, korpuss, korpuslingvistika

## **Abstract**

It is known that passive voice is used frequently in formal style and it does not occur much in spoken communication, but could the use of passive voice differ depending on topic? The paper investigates topic-dependent use of passive voice in the sources, which can be found in English corpora. The research hypothesis is that the use of passive voice will differ in diverse subjects. To validate the hypothesis and to reach the goal, the research theory and previous studies in the field have been explored. Five English verbs have been selected for analysis and searched in three corpora selected for the research by using an online program *Compleat Lexical Tutor/Concordance*. The most relevant samples have been collected and their use in passive voice was analysed, while taking into account the discipline or subject in which they occur and to observe the examples, which are provided by each of the corpora selected for the research. Several conditions can denote the use of passive, but the results of the research suggest that topic can have some influence on the use of the passive voice.

**Keywords:** passive voice, English passive voice, the use of passive voice, topic-dependent use, corpus, corpus linguistics

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	6
<b>Literature Review on Passive Voice.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1.Passive Voice in English.....	20
1.2.Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic theories.....	22
1.3.Topic-dependent Use of Corpus Linguistics.....	23
<b>Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1. Research Object .....	26
2.2.Research Units .....	27
2.3. Research Procedure.....	29
<b>Results and Discussion.....</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1. Findings.....	48
3.2. Discussion.....	49
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Theses.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>52</b>

## Introduction

Passive voice is used frequently and quite intensively in formal writing or speech to gain formality and objectivity. It is one of the most significant features of formal style. Passive voice is a grammatical category, which use and structure is often discussed by many linguists.

A large number of works have been devoted to the theories of grammar and possible usage of grammatical constructions, including Passive voice. Several scholars have drawn attention to different aspects and functions of Passive voice. Collins (2005) at the beginning of his work related to syntax admits that ‘the analysis of the passive is one of the cornerstones of the principles and parameters approach to syntax’. Researchers often discuss the necessity of using Passive voice in scientific writing and some academics, such as, Pruitt (1957) have even suggested that Passive should be avoided in academic writing. Yet some specialists, for example, Cowles and Ferreira (2012), have made an attempt to explore the impact and importance of topic in formation of sentences and depending on the syntax. It is important to investigate the usage of Passive voice and the factors that influence the use of Active voice or Passive voice in a particular discourse.

The current study is devoted to consideration of possible differences in the use of Passive forms in various disciplines. So the **goal** of the research is to find out the usage of English Passive verb forms, which could be observed in English corpora. The **hypothesis** is that the use of passive in formal texts differs from the use of passive constructions in less formal texts. For instance, the use and frequency of verbs in passive forms in a business letter would be different than the use of passive in informal conversation.

So that the **research question** is the following– Could the use of the Passive voice differ depending on the topic?

To reach the goal of the research, such **enabling objectives** have been stated:

1. To study theoretical material and various publications on Passive voice;
2. To apply the most appropriate research method;
3. To select five English verbs and search examples with the use of the verbs in passive voice from three corpora – Brown Corpus, BNC Written and BNC Spoken;

4. To analyse the examples selected for the empirical part of the study;
5. To compare and to consider the use of passive voice depending on the topic;
6. To draw relevant conclusions.

Concordance as the research method has been applied since it is considered the most relevant method for corpus-based research. It provides an easy and rapid access to a large number of units in corpora and to search for certain units, for example, words or phrases and their possible context. The texts in a corpus are checked for certain linguistic features. Many authors admit that online tools are important for corpus-based research.

First two chapters provide the theoretical background to the present study. Chapter 1 is devoted to the literature review on passive voice and the main aspects of the passive voice and the chapter has got two subchapters. The first subchapter is focused on the definition of topic-dependent use and studies related to topic-dependent use. The second subchapter is devoted to topic-dependent use of passive voice.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the methodology of the research and the first subchapter is focused on the description of the corpora which have been used in the research. The second subchapter represents the description of the research units, that is, the passive verb forms, which have been selected for analysis and extracted in the corpora.

Chapter 3 is related to the results of the empirical part. The first subchapter provides the discussion of the results of the study and the second subchapter provides the conclusions based on the theory reviewed in the study and empirical research.

## 1. Literature Review on Passive voice

The chapter is aimed at providing the theoretical background for the research and the review of previous studies and possibly the most important achievements in the field and recent studies of English passive voice, starting with commonly accepted knowledge of passive voice and including some distant proposals related to passive voice.

First of all, passive voice itself and formation of the passive should be defined. Passive voice is commonly perceived as a grammatical category. It is common knowledge that verbs in English mostly can be divided into transitive verbs and intransitive verbs. Transitive verbs are the verbs, which have direct object and the largest part of transitive verbs can be formed in passive. Passive in the Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar is defined as ‘designating the voice of the verb whereby the grammatical subject ‘suffers’, ‘experiences’, or ‘receives’ the action of the verb’ (Chalker, Weiner, 1994). The most common passive voice construction consists of auxiliary verb and participle II. The most frequent auxiliary is corresponding form of the auxiliary verb ‘be’, but passive voice constructions can be formed with other auxiliary verbs, for instance, the auxiliary verb ‘get’. Usually transitive verbs can be used in passive voice constructions (Chalker, Weiner, *ibid*: 1994). Short passives and long passives are distinguished in general. The agent of the action is omitted in short passives and the agent is included in long passives in a by-phrase.

*Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature* provides definitions for both, passive voice and active voice (Woltag, last time reviewed Jan. 2015). The basic grammar rules regarding active voice and passive voice are introduced simply and clearly. Active voice and passive voice form different sentence structures and the relations between the subject of a sentence and the verb are represented differently. The subject performs the action clearly and directly in active sentence although in passive sentence the subject is acted by the verb. ‘Active voice clearly identifies the agent of the actor’ (Woltag, 2015). It is also admitted that passive voice is often viewed as a grammatical issue since it can be misleading and hinder a reader’s right understanding of the meaning of the sentence. Then, the use of passive voice often makes sentences more unintelligible. The writers use passive voice frequently if they wish to single out

the subject. It is well-known that passive voice can be acceptable in some occasions, but it is suggested that passive voice should be avoided as much as possible. Active voice is more direct and thus the use of active voice can make a stronger effect on a reader (Woltag, *ibid*: 2015).

There are many publications and articles related to grammatical theories and grammar rules of English, but several researchers have attempted to study various grammatical features outside of prescriptive grammatical framework. Passive voice is a well - known grammatical phenomenon but it can be still studied from many different perspectives and various aspects of Passive voice have been studied, for instance, passive constructions and syntactic functions (Reed, 2011, Collins, 2005), adoption of Passive voice in written discourse, or it has been compared with Active voice (Pinker, 2014). Pinker (*ibid*:2014) writes that passive voice should be chosen over active voice, because it has got some advantages, for example, the doer in passive sentence may not be mentioned, if it is irrelevant. Though many scholars persist on avoidance of passive voice and they suppose passive voice to be irrelevant and confusing, Pinker asserts that passive voice is the right choice in writing. The author agrees that overuse of passive is not very good style, but he finishes his article favouring the use of passive voice with a statement that ‘passive voice is not just something that bad writers overuse’ (Pinker, *ibid*: 2014).

It is known that two approaches to grammar could be distinguished – descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar. Basically, the prescriptive grammar could be viewed as a set of previously approved grammatical rules and ideas about ‘correct’ and ‘ideal’ use of language. While descriptive grammar could be defined as a grammatical theory and in theoretical grammar possible use of a language is reviewed and many aspects of language are considered in descriptive grammar, which would not have much attention in prescriptive grammar. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) agree that prescription and description are two different approaches to grammar, but as the authors suppose, the main difference between these two approaches is the goal of each discipline and they note that some issues viewed in prescriptive or descriptive grammar can overlap. Though prescriptive grammar investigates some topics, which have no much attention in descriptive grammar and some topics, which should be explored by descriptive grammar, are disregarded in prescriptive grammar (Huddleston, Pullum, 2002: 5). Passive voice has been explored and described by using prescriptive or descriptive grammar approach.

A number of publications related to prescriptive and theoretical grammatical rules have been written, for instance, Blokh (1994) has provided a framework of English theoretical grammar, which the author has intended for the English departments and teacher training, respectively, for academic use. The author intends to introduce with the main problems, which may arise in the studies of English grammatical system. Grammar is viewed as a system of language in general and as a tool for communication. The book is mostly devoted to a review of various grammatical categories and grammatical classification of such grammatical units as words and sentences and also grammatical categories of verbs. The author reviews also passive voice in relations with verbs as a category of voice and first, Blokh gives a description of the main characteristics of passive voice, which are previously approved by earlier considerations of the passive voice. The author says that the category of voice is extremely different from other grammatical categories if viewed from the point of its referential characteristics (Blokh, 1994: 172) and also states that category of voice in English is a broad category in comparison with Russian verb system due to that not only transitive, but also intransitive verbs can be formed in passive (Blokh, *ibid*: 1994: 171).

Downing and Locke (2006) have written a publication related to general concepts of English grammar, which includes clause structure, aspects of verbs, such as modality, tense; organising and sending a message in communication and a number of other aspects, including voice. The both authors have also mentioned some aspects of passive voice, for instance, passivisation, in other words, turning active sentence into passive, so that changing sentence structure and not only the structure is changed but the functions of the Subject and the Object of a sentence are different. They agree that in restructuring a sentence not only the position of the participants is changed, but also topic is promoted or demoted, giving higher or lower position to one of the doers. There are some sections devoted to passive voice, but passive voice is mainly viewed in relations with sentence structure and organisation of a text. The both authors admit that choosing the passive allows not to state the doer of the action, while this information cannot be skipped in active sentence and, after all, the choice of using the passive means to become more informative. Further, the combination of passive verb constructions with aspects is discussed.

Other quite large and advanced study on English grammar is provided by Biber, Conrad and Leech (1999, 2002) and other their co-operators and quite useful

and large section is devoted to the forms and the use of passive. The both publications give the introduction to basic grammar, a corpus-based approach to the English grammar and also some wider perspective on the English grammar. There is a general introduction to various grammatical categories, word classes and the choice of grammatical patterns in communication is investigated and quite many new findings are represented. The first publication is an advanced and enormous work devoted to the grammatical concepts in English grammar, but the second publication, which is shorter, is aimed for students and teachers of English. As the authors claim, the grammar studies are mostly focused on grammatical structures and grammatical forms, describing them out of context, but choice in grammar how to speak or write in a particular discourse, the real use of grammatical forms and meanings in spoken and written discourse and it should be explored and understood which factors can influence this choice, (Biber, Conrad and Leech, 2002). Further, the authors provide a description of short passives, long passives and get-passives more in detail. It is mentioned that only five verbs are commonly used in get-passives (Biber, Conrad and Leech, *ibid*: 2002:171). They also admit in the both publications that the use of verbs in get-passives is quite rare. In the first publication, the authors also define various types of passive voice constructions, such as, finite and non-finite forms of passive voice and the use of passive with two-object prepositional verbs. Furthermore, the authors distinguish stative passive and dynamic passive, which are formed with a stative or dynamic verb respectively. Stative passives describe a particular state, rather than action and dynamic passives denote some action, (Biber, Conrad, Leech, 1999:936).

Similarly with Downing and Locke (2006), Biber, Conrad, and Leech in their first publication have stated that using the passive involves restructuring a sentence. In the section devoted to passive voice the types of passive voice constructions are identified and described and the use of passive in relation with its syntactic position, functions in discourse and its significance in various registers is reviewed. After that, there is a list of verbs collected in the second edition and, as the authors suppose the percentage of their frequency in passive verb forms, at the same time noting the English verbs, which occur rarely in passive constructions, or which verbs occur more often in written or spoken discourse. Such verbs occur rarely in passive voice as the verbs *guess, mind, love, belong to, agree with* and many others (Biber, Conrad and Leech, *ibid*: 2002:172). It is confirmed that passive voice is usually applied to provide

more formality and impersonality. The gradation of formality varies in different discourses, but it is especially high in academic register, while it is not very common in conversation (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999:478-79). Finally, in the first publication the authors represent the frequency of particular verbs, which occur mostly in passive forms, in several registers, such as, conversation, fiction, news, and in academic writing. They have investigated the occurrence of the selected verbs per million words and which verbs occur over 40 or 100 times per million words in academic prose, in news and in conversation. For example, such verbs as *expressed*, *measured*, *obtained*, and so on; they occur over 100 times per million words in academic prose and such verbs occur in news as *charged*, *injured*, *jailed*, *announced*, and others, over 40 times per million words, according to Biber, Johansson, Conrad and Finegan, *ibid*: 1999: 478-79).

Then, Emonds (2013) states that other types of auxiliaries have not been recognized by previous studies of English passive voice as intransitive verbs *be* or *get*. There are verbs, which can function as not only transitive verbs, but also as auxiliaries and they are such verbs as, *have*, *get*, *want*, *hear*, *need* or *see* (Emonds, *ibid*: 2013: 59). Emonds calls them indirect passives. The author writes that indirect passives have similar structure to other passive constructions and the only difference is that the auxiliary is a transitive verb. Indirect passive voice constructions involve Noun phrase (NP) and indirect passives are verbal and they are not adjectival passives.

Collins (2005) has proposed analysis of principles and parameters of passive voice, which means reviewing the passive not according to specific rules but in relations with syntax. He analysed the structure of sentences in passive more in detail and also wrote about so-called pseudo-passives. The author claims that his theory has got similarities with the theories by Chomsky, and he has also reviewed some other researcher's approaches to passive voice. The author supports Chomsky's (1957, 1982, cited by Collins, 2005) approach to passive voice, that is, that the argument in passive is expressed practically in the same way as in active. Postal and Baltin (1996: 143, cited by Collins, 2005) has stated that the problem of consideration of grammatical case in passive constructions arises from the deprivation of the studies of passive poses.

Swan (2000) has reviewed various passive verb forms. He starts with the comparison of passive and active voice. Then he turns to passive verb forms, for instance, verbs with two objects, verbs with the object and infinitive and different

forms of infinitive and other grammatical aspects of passive voice. He has also written which verbs are usually not used in passive constructions, for example, *die*, or *arrive*, because these verbs are intransitive verbs, that is, the verbs cannot have objects. Some transitive verbs, stative verbs, such as, *have*, *lack*, *resemble*, and others, and prepositional verbs, such as, *agree with*, *walk into*, are also used rarely in passive voice constructions. Further, some verb constructions are noted as being confusing for students – they can confuse some active forms with passive and the author provides an explanation of these typical mistakes. The possible choice of active or passive in sentence structure is also reviewed and as it is confirmed by other researchers, Swan writes that passive is often chosen in case when we talk about an action, but we are not interested to say the doer of the action. He states ‘‘that grammar and meaning does not always go together’’ (Swan, *ibid*: 2000).

In other words, some researchers, such as, Biber, Finegan, Leech and Conrad suppose that many specialists do not pay enough attention to the language use in communication and it should be further investigated. Later, the description of the frequency of certain verbs occurring in passive forms is provided. The use of passive voice in different discourses has been described and which passive voice constructions occur in formal writing, in news most frequently. It is admitted by the authors that passive voice is used quite rarely in a conversation, though, some specialists, for example, Jan Svartvik (1985), have also made a deep corpus-based study on voice in English, or Johnson-Laird (1968a, 1968b) who has made publications in *British Journal of Psychology* and in *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*. The author has paid attention to the choice of language use by a speaker or a writer and what can motivate them to choose certain options in producing sentences. He has explored exactly the usage of passive voice, that is, the choice of passive in communication. In the second study Johnson-Laird (1968b) proposed a hypothesis that a sentence in passive voice may emphasize the importance of its grammatical subject more than the same sentence in active voice. The results of the research proved the author’s expectations of the tendency of subject of any sentence to be represented as more important than object and the subjects in passive sentences are represented as more important than the subjects in active sentences, (Johnson-Laird, 1968b).

Chomsky (1957), who has come with many revolutionary ideas concerning linguistics and has developed different theories, in his publication, devoted to syntax

and grammatical constructions claims that active and passive structures do not have exactly the same meaning, in contrast with suppositions of other specialists. First of all, he defined language as a set of sentences, which are finite in length each and they are constructed out of a finite set of elements, (Chomsky, *ibid*: 1957). Then he introduces the difference between grammatical and non-grammatical sentences and evaluates two models for the consideration of the structure of a language – a communication theoretic model and a phrase structure model, which is, as Chomsky writes, ‘based on immediate constituent analysis’ (Chomsky, *ibid*: 1957). He also supposes that linguistic theory cannot be applied to some natural languages since any grammar based on this theory would be too complex and unrevealing and he attempts to prove inadequacy of this theory and he supports the second model.

Svartvik (1985) has described passive voice as a grammatical category in the verbal group and he mentions appearance of a sudden interest by academics in the passive voice recently. He has also done corpus-based research to consider the main issues of the passive in English and the use of present-day English and also to consider if there is any difference between uses of passive found in a corpus and the use of passive prescribed by grammatical rules. Svartvik also identifies and proposes a classification of clause types and different types of passive verb clauses and examines the use of passive clauses in present-day English. He distinguished generally extensive and intensive clause types. The extensive and intensive clause types differ, first, by their structure, the number of cardinal structural elements, that is, clause elements, and the difference between extensive and intensive clause types is also influenced by the category of voice. Then, Svartvik describes various verbal group types and the major types of verbal group types are simple and complex verbal group types and in the simple verbal group the lexical verbs without an auxiliary verb are included and the complex verbal group contains lexical verb with the auxiliary verb. Further, the finite complex verbal group, according to Svartvik, could be divided into four types: *a* (‘modal’), *b* (‘perfective’), *c* (‘continuous’) and *d* (‘passive’), (Svartvik, *ibid*: 1985: 10). So that passive voice is one of the complex verbal group types. The verbal group types can be combined with each other and that means that, for instance, passive can be formed by adding a modal verb, or with continuous or perfect tense form. After that, what concerns corpus-based research, he claims that passive forms found in a corpus can give more consideration of real language use.

Baratta (2009) has written that by using passive not only objectivity is achieved in academic writing, in which passive voice is traditionally more frequent, but the writer's stance can be expressed by using the passive. The author argues that more objectivity is often gained by applying passive, so that omitting or not giving emphasis to the subject in formal style, while, as the author claims, the stance is also expressed in the use of passive constructions. Baratta also explains how the stance can be shown and proves his arguments with illustrating examples taken from the essays by three undergraduate students in the School of Education at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. The author investigated the use of passive in the essays of the students. Taking into account the results of the analysis of the essays, Baratta concludes that passive stance can be another way to reveal one's personal considerations in formal writing.

Buysens (1979) aimed to explore the reasons, why active voice with passive meaning is preferred rather than passive. The author states that grammatical form as a term has got general meaning and it should not be perceived as opposite to grammatical categories of mood, tense and voice and the author supposes that various verb forms should be studied closer and separately.

Barber (1975) says that linguists usually consider only active and passive as a grammatical category of voice since the both are the only well-developed categories of voice in English. The author aims to describe the main differences between voice divisions in active voice and middle voice and active and passive voice. As the author mentions middle voice existed in Proto-Indo-European language from which also English has been derived and middle voice has been preserved in some languages, for example, Barber has mentioned ancient Greek and Sanskrit. There is no much distinction between passive voice and middle voice constructions, and it seems that the middle voice is not developed in English. The author writes that passive voice is perceived as a strategy to move subject position, thus avoid mentioning or de-emphasising the subject (Barber 1975:16).

Some academics have further studied Passive voice and its relations with syntax, for example, Collins (2005) has described the principles of formation of Active and Passive voice constructions and explored Passive in relations with syntax. He adopts Chomsky's (1957) approach to Passive voice. Then, Wanner (2009) has described English passive voice and its role in linguistic theories and has introduced syntactic status and representation of Passive voice and, second, she has stated that

syntactic analysis of the Passive may provide more understanding of the use of the Passive. The author reviews the position and connection of the passive with linguistic theory, then the separate units of passive voice constructions, such as, verbs, verb transitivity and classification of verbs; passive forms, the role of agent in passive verb constructions and, finally, the use of passive in academic writing. She also writes that active and passive sentences can have similar prepositional meanings, but each clause represents different view to the action expressed in a statement (Wanner, *ibid*: 2009:9).

Bennett (1995) has devoted a significant publication to the theory of syntax, respectively, syntactic structure and the basic principles of the structure of English at the same time the author offers some new consideration related to the analysis of syntax, including passive structures. Bennett writes about passive voice in the section related to metarules and he admits that ‘passive construction is a classical problem in linguistic analysis’ (Bennett, *ibid*: 1995: 135). Then, the author describes and examines the structure of passive sentences and admits that active sentences have already passive counterparts and the verb can be viewed as a passive participle. After that, the use of the auxiliary verb *be* is examined and the author considers in which cases it can occur in a clause or in which cases it cannot be used. Bennett investigates alternative concepts of passive in another section, for example, *by*-phrase is supposed to be a modifier or it can be a complement in some cases, though in taking into ordering, it cannot be perceived as complement or modifier. The author refers to some other linguists, who have considered similar concepts, and reviews also passivisation in terms of lexicalism, admitting that passivisation is determined by lexical rules.

Reed (2011) has explored syntactic structures of get-passives and has analysed previous research done regarding get-passives and if get-passives are identical in syntactic structure with *be*-passives, as some researchers (Quirk 1972, Stein 1979, cited by Reed, *ibid*: 2011:42-43) have believed. The author has found that the hypothesis of the get-passives being actually adjectival and they can be easily passed by *be*-passives. The author has also four tests to check syntactic and adjectival structure of get-passives and *be*-passives and she supposes that early authors have had erroneous suppositions concerning get-passives, for example, the syntactic structure of get-passives is identical to the structure of *be*-passives, and the predicative element of get-passives is more adjectival rather than verbal, and the research done by Reed, as the author supposes, is aimed to reorient all the research in the field.

Further, grammatical aspects of English passive voice have been explored by many scholars, but some have drawn attention to the use of passive voice in certain disciplines, for instance, Leong (2014) has explored the frequency of the use of passive in scientific writing and the author admits that scientific writing is not much explored. Leong has investigated a corpus of 60 scientific articles from six journals. The results of the research reveals that about 30 % of all the clauses were in passive. The author has found that in the articles collected for the research, passive was mostly used in the main clauses followed by relative or adverbial clauses.

Pruitt (1968) has devoted an article to the argumentation against the presumption that the use of passive voice in research reports aids to show objectivity. The author disputes the supposition that the use of passive provides more objective tone. He supposes that this argument has got almost no validity. He writes that the use of passive voice makes a writer to sound more convincing, but it does not always mean that the writer is actually objective and passive voice does not carry out the meaning accurately. Pruitt even suggests that passive voice restrains rather than establishes effective communication. The author examines the arguments that passive voice is a means to achieve objective research report and he claims that passive voice is usually applied to make subjective statement to sound objective. In his opinion, some researchers saw that passive voice could gain objective tone in their research and they invented the rule of using passive voice in academic style and they started to follow this practice. The author claims that the use of passive voice in objective report of research is illogical, and artificial and passive voice itself is illogical. He supposes so, because, first, if active sentence is converted into passive sentence, the logical order is ruined, so that the actor is left somewhere in the end or the doer of the action is omitted at all in passive sentences.

Another writer, who has contradicted the use of passive voice in academic writing, is Sigel (2009). In his publication he has tried to prove that passive voice can weaken arguments and the purpose of the author's publication is to aid researchers to represent more effectively their statements in active voice instead of passive. The major statement of Sigel is that intense use of passive in academic works hinders clarity, and in active sentences the meaning is clearer. Another statement by the author is that on using active voice, the researchers demonstrate more understanding of the subject they have explored. Sigel also provides examples, by which he illustrates, how much more clarity is gained by using active voice. On the other hand,

Sigel does not mean that passive voice should be avoided totally in academic style. He states that the use of passive voice should be limited, but not omitted completely.

Since the current study is basically a corpus-based study, few significant publications related to corpus linguistics would be included in the review. One of such publications is a textbook by McEnery and Hardie (2012). They introduce with corpus linguistics as a theory and as a methodology to analyse the samples of language use in corpus and the development of corpus linguistics so that providing another, the potential of corpora in linguistic studies new perspectives in linguistic studies and they describe various methods for exploration of corpora although as they presume, the book is not aimed to provide instructions how to do research in a corpus. They describe various types of corpora, for instance, corpora of spoken or written language, monitor corpora and they discuss the concept of the Web as a corpus and have compared monolingual corpora to multilingual corpora. The authors mention that corpora can represent different modes of language, that is, written mode or spoken mode and compare corpora of written language with the corpora of spoken language. Different kinds of corpora are juxtaposed one with another. The both authors also discuss the significance of corpus linguistics in relations with other fields of linguistics, such as, functionalist linguistics, computational linguistics and psycholinguistics.

Furthermore, a corpus could be defined as a compilation of written or spoken texts, which represent the use of present day language and it can be quite a useful tool to search for examples of language use. The researchers Francis and Kučera (1967) have analysed and described the Brown Corpus for the first time and they can be considered as the beginners of the modern corpus linguistics. Several researchers have investigated and made a lot of publications on corpus linguistics, for example, E. Tognini-Bonelli (2001), T. McEnery (2003, 2012), or J. Svartvik (1992).

Then, Tognini-Bonelli (ibid: 2001) has also reviewed corpus linguistics as a method and theory and has written that one of the main issues in corpus linguistics is to consider if it is only methodology or linguistic theory. She reviews the peculiarities of a corpus-based approach to linguistic studies, possible advantages of corpus-based research and issues in exploration of a corpus. She adds that many linguists, who do linguistic research in corpora, argue against the supposition of corpus linguistics only as methodology and other specialists find connection of corpus linguistics with computational and algorithmic methods. The author says that corpus linguistics is

becoming a new research enterprise and approach to linguistic studies and defines a corpus as an empirical approach the studies of language use (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). According to Tognini-Bonelli, a corpus can be used as a valuable source for exemplifying and developing linguistic theories, while one of the possible issues in exploration of corpus can be elaboration of a relevant research method to consider language use in corpora. Later, she also writes about contextual and historical meaning of language use and the author supposes that meaning in linguistic studies has never had investigated enough, to study meaning was viewed as somehow irrelevant, (Tognini-Bonelli, *ibid*: 2001: 165). After that, the author describes the structuralist approach to meaning and theory of structuralism by Saussure.

Svartvik (1992) writes about a rapid development of corpus linguistics, to be more precise, the development of machine-readable corpora and it has begun with the compilation of the Brown Corpus in early 1960's by H. Kučera and W. N. Francis and soon after that a huge number of other corpora appeared in many other universities and other places in the world. According to Svartvik (*ibid*: 1992: 6-7), the term 'corpus linguistics' is quite new and this term is referred to linguistic research of texts in corpora, but as the author writes, collecting samples manually from huge amount of texts for linguistic analysis is quite usual in linguistics with a long history and corpus-based research can be perceived as a modern version of this practice. He states that one of the reasons corpus linguistics has gained its popularity is due to that a huge amount of data can be accessible easily and in a moment. The author also notes to the rapid growth of corpus-based studies since the 1960's and interest in corpus linguistics has advanced English studies (Svartvik, *ibid*: 1992: 8).

Then, McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2006) explore representativeness of a corpus, the meaning of representativeness in corpus linguistics and how representativeness of corpus should be considered. Corpus is representative of language variety, if it is able to provide samples of this particular language variety (Leech, 1991, cited by McEnery, Xiao and Tono, 2006). The authors state that the purpose of corpus is to represent a language or a language variety and representativeness is required for corpora (McEnery, Xiao, Tono, *ibid*: 2006: 13). Another characteristics of corpora reviewed by the writers are balance and sampling. Balance is described as the range of text categories involved in a corpus. Representativeness, balance and sampling are linked with each other. According to McEnery, Xiao and Tono, corpus

representativeness depends on how balanced corpus is, and they are associated with sampling.

To summarise, many academics still have great interest in exploration of passive voice and their interest has not changed in recent years, so that studies of passive voice are still endured. Although many authors have just reduplicated the theories related to the basic concepts of passive voice, some novel theories have been proposed regarding the passive. Many researchers agree that to study passive voice is important. Passive voice, traditionally viewed as a grammatical category, it has been investigated in relation with syntax, semantics, morphology and other linguistic layers and the difference of passive voice or active voice has also been explored, and it is possible that further linguistic studies of English passive voice are recommended.

### ***1.1 Passive voice in English***

Before we turn to topic-dependent use of passive voice, we should consider first what we know about English passive voice, respectively, what has been explored by linguists about passive voice in English, because many languages have been analysed from grammatical perspective. The subchapter is aimed to describe passive voice in English, since the research is focused on the use of passive in English.

It is common knowledge that passive voice in English is formed mainly by auxiliary verb and participle II or participle with (– ed) suffix. Many researchers have described various types of passives, such as Biber, Leech, Conrad, (1999, 2002), Reed (2011) and others. Mostly *get*-passives and *be*-passives are distinguished in terms of auxiliary verb used in passive construction, or passive forms are divided into short and long passives. In comparison of short passives, in long passive sentence the agent is not excluded yet the importance of the agent is diminished. One of the main differences between passive voice and active voice is sentence structure. Agent can still be preserved in a passive sentence. The difference between active and passive clauses is grammatical, because the positions of the agent and the subject are changed.

Huddleston (1984) introduces with the basic concepts of English grammar and reviews grammatical parts of speech in their traditional classification. Deeper analysis on grammatical structure, clause types, verbal phrases, complement types and other subjects in grammar are represented. The author admits the lack of interest in thematic

systems in English grammar and the reason could be that there is no established system, but category of voice is the exception. The active voice is an unmarked form, while passive is marked (Huddleston, 1984:17). The author also admits that the whole clause or just the verb phrase, as, for example, verb phrase *is given*, can be referred as 'active' or 'passive' (Huddleston, *ibid*: 1984: 60). After that, Huddleston has drawn attention to passivisation and changes which are involved in the transformation of an active sentence into passive sentence and states that in passivisation of a sentence the object can be made into the subject. In addition, passivisation could be related to the description of some action, movement in passive. It is common in academic writing. Many characteristics concerning passive voice or passivisation have been reviewed in connection with the main peculiarities of verb phrases. Then, the writer also characterised and distinguished between passive past participles and perfect past participles. Active and passive is also viewed under in terms of thematic systems and category of voice is defined as a system. The agent is defined as a syntactic function. It is expressed by *by*-phrase and agent is found only in passive clauses. The short passives, that is, without the agent occurring, are defined as agentless passives.

Toyota (2009) has analysed passive verbs forms in English, their grammatical features, morphosemantic characteristics and transitivity. The author has focused on the historical changes of verbal passive and adjectival passive. Toyota claims that there are verbs in English, which have had both active and passive forms, but only passive forms of the verbs have remained and the author is surprised to find that not so many previous studies have been devoted to explore these verbs. The research by Toyota is focused basically on the historical changes of the English verbs and the author has analysed some verbs, which, as the author has observed, have only passive forms.

In conclusion, the peculiarities of the English passive voice have drawn much attention by linguists. One of the characteristics, which has been much investigated, is the elements of passive voice in English, such as, the agent and the subject and their relations. After that, the use of active or passive can give impact on not only the sentence structure and syntactic functions of the object and the object of a sentence, but also the meaning of the sentence.

## *1.2. Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theories*

The subchapter represents the approach to corpus linguistics by linguists and its connection with linguistic theories. Corpus linguistics is quite a novel field in linguistics and it is closely related to other branches of linguistics.

Corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistics, which deals with large amounts of data of language use in corpora. It is defined as empirical study of natural language use and its use under certain condition (Stoica, 2008). Stoica (ibid: 2008) also writes that ‘Corpus linguistics with the aid of automation and with the availability of large, comprehensive corpora is a booming field that researchers predict will continue to dominate research on language’ and the author also adds that corpus linguistics is perceived as useful in language acquisition and language teaching.

The compilation of the Brown Corpus at the Brown University by H. Kučera and S. F. Wallis in early 1960’s is considered as the beginning of modern corpus linguistic, although Hugh of St. Cher with assistance of a group of monks have compiled samples of words from the Latin Vulgate Bible in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Aston, cited by Barnbrook, Zyngier and Vander, 2011; McEnery, Hardie, 2012: 37). Corpus linguistics is often viewed as a methodology. Although several linguists, for example, Tognini-Bonelli (2001) argue against the approach of viewing corpus linguistics as only a research method. Many linguists have discussed about effectivity of corpus linguistics, and some linguists have disputed the use of a corpus. For example, Chomsky (1957, cited by Stoica) supposes that the sources in corpora are incomplete and they do not represent the real use of language. Although Guy Aston, on the interview he says that corpus linguistics is actually both - theory and methodology. In Aston’s supposition, corpus linguistics is a science since it has got its study object, which is language use in naturally occurring speech and writing (cited by Barnbrook and Zyngier, (2011). Paul Baker shares the same opinion with Guy Aston about corpus linguistics being both, science and methodology. (Cited by Barnbrook and Zyngier, ibid: 2011:18).

Quite many academic publications have been devoted to corpus linguistics. McEnery and Hardie (2012) have written rather great publication related to corpus linguistics theory, research methods and various approaches to treat data in corpora and the authors provide a small historical background of the development of electronic corpora and research tools for a corpus analysis. McEnery and Wilson (2001) admit that in corpus linguistics the researchers can explore various aspects of

language use, for instance, grammar, semantics and pragmatics. Meyer (2004) describes corpus annotation and analysis and how corpus analysis is linked with linguistic theory and the construction of a corpus. He reviews corpus linguistics mainly as a methodology. Meyer also reviews previously done research by other authors and he admits that much of the research has been related to the use of grammatical constructions or lexical units in some context. At the end of the publication the author represents his suppositions of the future perspectives for corpus linguistics.

After that, McEnery and Hardie (2012) have described concordance as the research method and also the historical background of concordance and the origins of software tools for corpus-based research, that is, how and when the first computer programs have been created. It was Robert Busa, who has created the first machine-readable corpus and concordances in electronic format in 1951, although he has not invented concordance as a method in corpus-based studies. The first concordances were compiled manually from a certain set of texts. The above mentioned Hugh of St. Cher has compiled the first concordance of terms from the Latin Vulgate Bible in 1230 and provided index for every item in which page it occurs.

To summarise, corpus linguistics can be considered as a comparatively new niche in linguistics, because the beginnings of modern corpus linguistics can be traced only in the 1960's. Corpus linguistics offers more possibilities in linguistic studies. The real use of speech and the use of language in writing can be observed by using a corpus.

### ***1.3. Topic-dependent Use of Passive Voice***

Many different aspects of passive voice have been studied frequently by linguists. However, the use of passive in relation with topic is not much explored. Quite few publications can be found. It is admitted that some grammatical constructions can be applied more frequently in a particular discourse.

First of all, topic-dependent use can be defined as a choice of the use of certain grammatical or other constructions according to subject. In other words, the choice of certain speech units can be dictated by previously given topic. Language use may vary in different discourses. It is well-known that different grammatical constructions and

vocabulary is used in news, legal discourse, business discourse and others. But it is important to find out whether the use of certain verb forms can be dependent on subject.

Not very much research has been done in topic-dependent use of language. Though some scholars have had some interest in exploration of connection between subject or topic and applying of certain structures, for instance, Cowles and Ferreira (2012) have investigated how sentences are produced in written or spoken discourse depending on topic and the importance of the topic in formation of sentences. They admit that a writer or a speaker should choose from many different options in syntax, for example, to choose active voice or passive voice, (Cowles, Ferreira, 2012). The authors have made several experiments to prove the influence of topic in choice of sentence constructions. They confirm that sentence structure can be influenced by topic as some other scholars have proved it, for instance, Prat-Sala and Brangian (2000, cited by Cowles and Ferreira).

Hinkel (2009) has investigated the influence of topic in the use of modal verbs in essays on five topics written by the native speakers of English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. The author has explored a small corpus of essays in L1 and L2 writing and has concluded that the topic has impact on the frequency of modal verbs differs in L1 and L2 writing. The results of the investigation show that the use of modals in L2 essays is significantly affected by topic, but the writing topic does not have such influence on the use of modal verbs of ability and modal verbs of possibility in the same L2 essays. The author admits that the results differ notably in L1 and L2 writing.

It is mentioned previously that passive voice is used traditionally in formal writing and academic discourse. It is also common in titles of news. Biber, Conrad and Leech (2002) admit that “a different set of verbs is common in the passive voice in news. The agent in these clauses is unimportant, unknown or previously mentioned.’ The agent often is not mentioned in the news titles. The authors have described in a few words general use of passive voice, which, as they presume, is applied more in written discourse than in speech. Some verbs are used mostly in passive and some constructions are used in certain occasions, for example, the expression ‘can’t be bothered’, which occurs only in spoken discourse. Fewer verbs are used more frequently in conversations than in written register. The authors agree that passive is less common and it is used for special discourse functions.

Though the use of passive voice has been much explored, not very many studies have been related to the use of passive depending on the topic of the text. Many scholars confirm that passive constructions can vary in different registers. Thus it is important to explore topic-dependent use of passive voice, and further research of connection between passive voice formation and topic is necessary. In the next chapter the research methodology, procedure and research units are presented.

## 2. Research Methodology

The subchapter is devoted to a description of the research method, which has been applied for the research. Since this is corpus-based research, the research method is related to corpus linguistics, which deals with the sources compiled in a corpus.

For the empirical part of the present study, ten passive voice verb forms have been selected from the lists of verbs in publications by Biber (1999, 2002) and his contributors and extracted from the corpora and analysed. The verbs have been selected on basis of their possible frequency in various disciplines. Ten examples of passive voice use have been extracted from the BNC and the Brown Corpus and their occurrence and context observed.

The British National Corpus and the Brown Corpus have been accessed online by using such online program as *Compleat Lexical Tutor*. It is quite a useful online site to search in various corpora via *Concordance*. The research method itself is rather simple, but the procedure of observing, selecting the most suitable samples for research and investigating the samples can be quite enduring and laborious. The program gives a long list of all the occurrences from one or several corpora and every sample should be reviewed and evaluated for validity for the investigation.

Further, Leech (1992, ed. by Svartvik) describes concordancing as the simplest and the most frequently used method for corpus-based linguistic studies. It allows to search in a corpus for certain linguistic units or a set of linguistic features. The concordance program extracts a list of all occurrences from a corpus and also represents in which contexts the samples are used.

In summary, concordance has been applied as the most suitable method and it has been used to search linguistic units in corpora since in the focus of the current research is the use of passive, which can be observed in English corpora, and in which

contexts the passive verbs occur. It is a simple research method, which aids to investigate the samples extracted from corpora and prove the hypothesis of the research. The next subchapters describe the both corpora involved in the research, research procedure and the verbs, which have been extracted in corpora and their topic-dependent use considered.

### ***2.1. Research Object. The Description of a Corpus***

The research object is the three corpora used in present study – the Brown Corpus, The BNC Written and the BNC Spoken. The subchapter is devoted to the description of the corpora, which have been chosen for the research.

The Brown Corpus was the first online-readable corpus compiled by Henry Kučera and W. Nelson Francis at Brown University, which is known as the Standard Corpus of Present Day Edited American English or simply the Brown Corpus, and it was released in 1964 (Online 6). The compilation of the Brown Corpus can be supposed as the beginnings of the modern corpus linguistics. The Brown Corpus was aimed for researchers and it was the first publicly available corpus (ibid: Online 6).

The British National Corpus (further in the text – BNC) and The Brown Corpus are two of the most familiar and the most frequently used online corpora and the Brown Corpus is one of the oldest. The BNC has been compiled in early 1990's and it represents the use of written and spoken British English and its total size is approximately 100 million words from a wide range of sources. It represents the use of English in late twentieth century, (Online 2), both, written and spoken. The BNC has been compiled mainly for researchers and publishers. The largest part of the BNC consists of written sources, for instance, the national and regional newspapers of the United Kingdom, books, academic publications and others.

The Brown Corpus is the first computer-based corpus, which has been compiled in 1960's by Henry Kučera and W. Nelson Francis in the United States at Brown University (Online 4). It consists of over one million words from various written sources representing the use of present day American English. It has been released in 1964, and its edited version was published in 1971. The samples of written texts were taken from the literature prose first published in 1961 or a little earlier, and the authors, as far as it could have been considered, were native speakers of American English. The corpus contains samples from various sorts of prose, for example, from

fiction, press, documents, reportages, academic texts and so forth (Online 5). Six versions of the Brown Corpus are available: Form A, which is the original form, Form B with omitted punctuation codes, the Form C, which is tagged, Bergen Forms I and II, and the Brown MARC Form (Online 6). The Brown Corpus contains 500 samples with around 2000 words each (ibid: Online 5, 6).

The BNC and the Brown Corpus are both rather huge (the total size - about 100 million and 1 million) of size and they contain examples of the usage of present day British English and American English. Though, only a couple of sections of the BNC have been accessed via *Compleat Lexical Tutor* – BNC Written and BNC Spoken, both in size of 1 million each and as the titles of the corpora suggest, they contain a compilation of written or spoken texts from many different sources. The examples from each corpus have been analysed and the use of passive voice in the selected sentences has been considered.

To summarise, the BNC and the Brown Corpus are two different corpora but each of them represents the possible use of British or American English and they can be useful for the research of the use of English passive voice. The corpora contain examples from English written and spoken discourse so that they can provide with the sources needed for the study. Both corpora are large in size and it provides more reliable and precise results.

## **2.2. Research Units**

The hypothesis of the present study was that the use of passive voice depends on the text topic. To test this hypothesis, not only theories by previous studies have been observed, but they also were tested in practice, so that several verb forms would be extracted in corpora and their use analysed. The subchapter is devoted to the description of the verbs, which have been tested for occurrence and context in the corpora.

Since the main issue of the research is the topic-dependent use of English passive voice, the list of verb passive forms of English have been collected and extracted from the BNC and the Brown Corpus to consider their use. Five Participle II forms have been selected from the lists of verbs from the works by afore-mentioned

Biber, Conrad and Leech (1999: 478, 2002) and which can be used in passive rather often. The verbs taken are the following:

1. Known;
2. Approved
3. Given;
4. Determined;
5. Told; (Biber, Conrad, Leech, *ibid*: 1999: 478, 2002).

These verbs are supposed to occur quite often in passive voice and their frequency in passive forms in the corpora has been investigated. Each verb in its participle form has been extracted from the corpora by using program *Compleat Lexical Tutor/Concordance* and frequency of their occurrence in the corpora selected for the study was considered along with the subject of the texts in which the verbs occurred in the passive voice. The verbs have been searched in the corpora in their participle forms, because the program shows the exact form of the unit, written in the search window.

As it was considered previously, passive voice constructions in English consist generally of auxiliary verb and participle II. For example, passive forms of the verb *to make* are such as, *is made*, *was made*, *were made*, or *have been made* and so forth. Only passives without any auxiliaries or other elements have been written in search and their use in passive has been identified in the samples provided in the corpora. Any passive forms found in contexts provided by the corpora have been observed for analysis.

To summarise, ten verbs have been selected from the publications related to English grammar by Biber (1999, 2002) and his contributors and have been analysed for passive form occurrence. The Participle II forms of the verbs have been searched in corpora and their use in passive voice constructions identified. Any possible use of the verbs in passive voice has been viewed. In the next subchapter the research procedure of collecting the list of verbs and searching the items in the corpora is presented.

### ***2.3. Research Procedure***

The development of computer technologies have made influence to many fields, including linguistics and the development of corpus linguistics and online corpora of various types of written and spoken texts has expanded the limitations for linguistic research and the present study is also based on exploration of samples found in online corpora.

In the research procedure, first, five passive verb constructions have been selected from the work by Biber, Conrad and Leech (1999: 478, 2002), who have described and have provided the list of verbs which occur mostly in passive or which are rare in passive. Then, the verbs have been extracted from the corpora via *Compleat Lexical Tutor/Concordance* and their use was observed. The use and frequency of each verb has been perceived.

Then, each item has been searched in the corpora by using *Compleat Lexical Tutor/ Concordance* and samples with their use in the passive voice have been searched. On writing the selected item in the search window and clicking on the search button, the program shows the list of all the occurrences of the searched unit, which can be found in the selected corpus or in several corpora. The program also allows to consider the context in which the word or phrase is used by showing the sample by showing it within the sentence or a fragment of the text it occurs.

After that, all the examples of the selected sample, which have been suitable for the current research, have been selected and observed. Then, the topic in which the verb construction has been used, was identified, whether it is a formal text, or speech, or some other register. The register of the text can be identified taking into consideration such characteristics as its style, vocabulary, formality and other. The major themes in which the verbs occur in passive have been observed and concluded.

Later, the results of corpus exploration have been analysed and summarised and the most significant and interesting findings will be presented in the next chapter. The use of the verbs in passive and their frequency in different subjects has been observed.

In summary, the research procedure of the present study was searching and observing the samples in corpora, which have been accessed by using online program. The next chapter is devoted to the presentation of the results of the research.

### 3. Results and Discussion

In the first two chapters the theoretical background of the present study and the review of previous studies related to passive voice, the use of passive voice and corpus linguistics have been provided and the third chapter represents the results of the empirical part of the research.

In the research procedure five different verbs have been selected and their participle forms have been searched in corpora and their use and occurrence in passive constructions was observed while taking into notice the subject of the text they have been found and the subjects in which the terms occurred, have been identified. The use of the verbs in passive was considered in each corpus. Not surprisingly, the passives have occurred mostly in various types of formal texts and publications and the BNC Spoken has shown considerably fewer examples of the use of passive voice.

The first of the verb participles searched in the corpora was the participle *known*. On observing all the examples shown by *Concordance* programme and it seems that the verb has mostly occurred in rather formal texts. The contexts, suggested by *Concordance*, have been various, but the most frequent topics are related to politics, academic research, description of some person, or in different kinds of formal meetings or in different kinds of formal texts. The examples from *Compleat Lexical Tutor/Concordance* are provided below and the passive voice constructions are underlined.

First of all, in the Brown Corpus, the verb participle II form *known* in passive has occurred rather often in various texts dealing with political matters, for example:

- a) 'But as the more concrete plans for the work of the Council gradually became known, there was a rather sharp and abrupt disappointment on all sides';
- b) 'Mr Khrushchev is known to rely heavily on his instincts about his adversaries and to be a shrewd judge of men'.

As we can see in the examples above, the Participle II form is used with the verb *become* as auxiliary in the first example and the participle is used with the auxiliary verb *be*, so that it is used in a be-passive construction.

Then, a lot of samples from academic writing and research reports can be found in the Brown Corpus, for instance:

- a) ‘Agents that are known to cause frequent infections among laboratory workers such as those causing Q fever, tularemia, brucellosis, glanders, coccidioidomycosis, etc., belong in this category’;
- b) ‘And there are some positive results, though the final findings will not be known for a long time – and then further research can be formulated’.
- c) ‘However, this artery is known to be a nutrient vessel with a distribution primarily to the proximal airways and supportive tissues of the lung.’

The participle II form *known* mostly occurs in short passive forms and in *be*-passives, same as in the previous samples represented.

Further, the verb in passive also occurs in legal context, for example:

- a) ‘In the preamble of the open-meeting statutes, collectively known as the Brown Act, the Legislature declares that ‘the public commissions, boards and councils and other public agencies in this state exist to aid in the conduct of the people’s business’’;
- b) ‘There are hereby created in the Treasury of the United States (1) a special fund to be known as the Yugoslav Claims Fund and (2) such other special funds as may, in the discretion of the Secretary of the Treasury, be required each to be a claims fund to be known by the name of the foreign government which has entered into a settlement agreement with the Government of the United States as described in subsection (a) of section 4 of this Title.’

In the first example, the passive is used with two-object prepositional verb, according to Biber and his contributors (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, 1999:475). In other words, the verb is used in a statement with a preposition. And passive has got non-finite form. The second example represents the use on short passive in non-finite construction (Biber, Johansson, Conrad, Leech, *ibid*: 937).

Then, some examples of the use of passive can be distinguished in fiction:

- a) ‘Twenty years ago, she would have been known as a golf widow, and the sum of her manner was perhaps one of bereavement’.

In this sample the verb in passive occurs in perfect tense and it is also used with a preposition.

After that, some examples can be distinguished in sources related to a description of some person or a place, for instance:

- a) ‘At the beginning of the Hippodrome I saw the Kaiser’s Fountain, an ugly octagonal building, with a glass dome, built in 1895 by the German Emperor, and on my left, directly across from it, the tomb of Sultan Ahmet, who constructed the Blue Mosque, more properly known by his name.’;
- b) ‘When the possibility that he had not given reconsideration to so weighty a decision seemed to disconcert his questioners, Mr Eisenhower was known to make his characteristic statement to the press that he was not going to talk about the matter anymore’.

Then, these examples can be found in contexts linked with marketing:

- a) ‘Now, if Morton’s newest product, a corn chip known as Chip-o’s, turns out to sell as well as its stock did, the stock may turn out to be worth every cent of the prices that the avid buyers bid it up to’.

One example can be considered in a news report:

- a) ‘The story of the fatal crash is not fully known’.

There is another example from context related to history:

- a) ‘In time Isfahan came to be known as ‘half the world’, Isfahan nisf-i-jahan’.

Later, the second of the corpora investigated in the research was BNC Written, which size is about one million words similarly with the two other corpora involved in the present study and it contains various types of written texts – academic texts, various publications, fiction and others. A lot of samples can be considered in academic register and various sources related to various subjects in politics or in historical events. First, some examples from academic contexts:

- a) ‘It is not known whether A. Lapillus can withstand being frozen into sea ice, but a number of other gastropods are able to survive this experience, and may be transported considerable distances in ice flows, (Medcof and Thomas, 1974)’;
- b) ‘Often we need to decide such equivalences in the context of the booleans representing the facts already known about the variables involved’;
- c) ‘It is less widely known that there was a comparable (although much smaller) dyeing industry in Ireland based on Nucella lapillus which seems to have been known of as far away as Minehead in Somerset (Cole, 1685).’

In the first example the passive is obviously used to introduce something of general knowledge, that is, something that is well-known for the specialists of that particular field. Then, it is short passive since the doer of the action is not introduced in the sentence and it is used with auxiliary verb be in present tense and it has got finite form. The use of non-finite passive occurs in the second example and in the third example passive voice is used in Perfect Infinitive form.

After that, the use of passive voice has been frequently found in political contexts. Various forms of passive can be distinguished, for instance:

- a) 'British domination of Egypt was set up by Sir Evelyn Baring (soon to be Lord Cromer and known to his subordinates as 'the Lord')';
- b) 'Because the polling system is new and complex, the results will not be known for several days, but most observers expect the local party's candidates to come in far behind the Popular Front and other unofficial groups';
- c) 'The Tigers, who are fighting for military supremacy in the Tamil-dominated north and east of the island, told a news conference their political wing would be known as the People's Front of the Liberation Tigers';
- d) 'Government sources, however, suggested that the Prime Minister would not necessarily change his team after the final outcome became known'.

Quite many examples occur in written materials concerning history or geography:

- a) 'The Buryats are known to have suffered several epidemics in the middle of the eighteenth century, and later it was the Itelmen of Kamchatka who were reduced by almost two-thirds';
- b) 'In response the Syrian-based Seljuk dynasty fought back, especially through the exploits of the Kurd Salah al-Din (Saladdin as he became known in the West) who himself took Egypt establishing his own Ayyubid dynasty in 1171';
- c) 'A Saxon origin is more plausible, for November was known as "blood month", a month of sacrifice, and 13 November was St Brice's Day – the anniversary of the massacre of the Danes by Ethelred II in 1002 (Stamford was the scene of Saxon and Danish conflict during the tenth century)'.

Similarly with the Brown Corpus, quite many samples with the use of the participle II known in passive voice have been found in contexts referred to some person or a place and the examples are as following:

- a) 'Little is known of his career before the Restoration, but it is likely that his appointment on 29 June 1660 as paymaster of the Works indicates services rendered to the court in exile, rather than architectural activity';
- b) 'The Princess Royal's bed is known as a St Ursula bed'.

In the examples provided above, be-passives and short passives are used in general. In the second example the passive is used with a preposition in order to introduce the subject of the statement.

After that, these are the examples of the use of long passives, which occur considerably more rarely than short passives:

- a) 'In some countries Brownies are known by different names and have different Promise Badges';
- b) 'The beer's name was also changed to conform to its traditional image, and will be known by the Italians as Tolly's Strong Ale, an English ale'.

The use of passive voice can be found also in contexts dealing with business and marketing. In some examples such verbs as make, become function as auxiliaries, for example:

- a) 'The name is significant because Sony are determinedly working to rename their Data Discman in the public mind and to ensure it becomes known as the Electronic Book Player';
- b) 'Unavoidable shortfalls are made known to the immediate manager';
- c) 'Include interests of groups of individuals and or companies if known, even if less than 3% held by individual members of the group'.

In the last example the passive occurs in non-finite form. Though it is said that passive voice is rarely used in spoken discourse, some examples with the use of passive in speech have been found in the BNC Spoken, which contains various contexts from spoken texts. The samples with the verb in passive mainly occur in contexts taken from various formal meetings and possibly from parliamentary speeches and the examples:

- a) 'Saddam has never been known for doing something for the benefit of others';
- b) 'We know a bit more about their massive pay increases, but not so much is known about the beautiful profits, about the wonderful conditions that they've allocated to themselves';

- c) ‘And it had been known that er the Tories that the Tories through the medium of er the economic league, you know, their their propaganda organization, the economic league, which was er which was substantially supported by the by the coal owners. Yeah, obviously, er, they’d been known they’d been known to come, er and try and have a meeting’.

The second item searched in all the three corpora was the participle II form *approved*. Undoubtedly, it is usually applied in more formal contexts, for instance, in various types of documents, business communication or with law. Few examples with the verb in passive have been distinguished in corpora. First of all, the examples from the Brown Corpus will be represented and there is one example with the use of the verb in passive in legal context:

- a) ‘The Commission shall notify all claimants of the approval or denial of their claims, stating the reasons and grounds therefore, and if approved, shall notify such claimants of the amount for which such claims are approved. Any claimant whose claim is denied, or is approved for less than full amount of such claim, shall be entitled, under such regulations as the Commission may prescribe, to a hearing before the Commission, or its duly authorized representatives, with respect to such claim’.

In these two sentences different use of the verb in passive can be observed. There is the use of the passive in non-finite form and the next two occurrences of the use of passives are be-passives, which is the most common passive voice construction. The next example has been found in political context:

- a) ‘The Senate quickly whipped through its meagre of House bills approved by committees, passing the three on the calendar.’

In the example represented above the verb is used in long passive, which use is considerably rarer than the use of short passives. The next example has been considered in a formal context, possibly it is taken from some document:

- a) ‘Acceptance of radiopasteurization is likely to be delayed, however, for two reasons (1) the storage life of fresh chicken under refrigeration is becoming a minimal problem because of constantly improved sanitation and distributing practices, and (2) treatment by antibiotics, a measure already approved by the

Federal Food and Drug Administration, serves to extend the storage life of chicken at a low cost of about 0.5 cent per pound’.

In this sample the verb also occurs in long passive and it can be also considered as non-finite form of passive voice. The BNC Written offers similar examples with the verb *approved* in passive. The example mostly occur in political and business contexts and the samples with the use of passive:

- a) ‘Disclose the date on which the accounts were formally approved by the board’;
- b) ‘More than half have been approved by ministers already’;
- c) ‘It expressed regret for the violence, presumably approved by the leadership of Mr Milos Jakes, with which riot police suppressed the student demonstrations on November 17’.

Then, finally, two examples from the BNC Spoken:

- a) ‘That draft er approved by the Social Affairs Council a week ago does not allow the flexibility for companies and their employees to determine working time arrangements at local plant level, but we do question the E E C’s involvement in this area’;
- b) ‘Is that approved by the assembly that that is then given to the panel as a new responsibility?’

As we can observe, these examples represent the use of the verb *approved* in long passives and the agent of the action in sentence is represented in a by-phrase. Practically in all examples found in the corpora the verb *approved* is used in long passives.

The next verb participle II form searched in corpora was the verb *given*. The corpora have shown a number of results for the verb in passive constructions and it is used in a wide range of contexts. Similarly with the previous items, the verb in passive occurs in academic and political contexts rather frequently. First, the examples from the contexts related to political matters from the Brown Corpus:

- a) ‘He would tell the Poles, he said, that they had been ‘given a fine place to live in, more than three hundred miles each way’;
- b) ‘Wexler had charged the precinct judges in these cases with complementary miscount of the vote, in which votes would be taken from one candidate and given to another’;

- c) ‘John Adams took to heart the advice given him by his legal mentor, Jeremiah Gridley, ‘to pursue the study of the law, rather than the gain of it’.

The first two examples represent the use of be-passives, only the tense differs and in the third example the participle is used in non-finite form of passive voice and the agent of the action is introduced in by-phrase, so that it can be considered as long passive. The next examples have been taken from academic contexts:

- a) ‘The data given in Table 2, show the routine operation of the aerator’;  
b) ‘Other morphological, physical and optical property values are also given’;  
c) ‘The direction of the tension of minimum pressure is, of course, given by the direction of the major axis of the ellipsoids’.

Non-finite form of the passive can be identified in the first example and in the next two examples be-passives can be distinguished, each of them in short or long passives respectively. Then, there is an example from, possibly, news report and long passive also is applied in the example:

- a) ‘It is the only county in the state so far this month reporting a possible shortage in GA category, for which emergency allotment can be given by the state if necessary’.

In another example taken from a context related to parapsychology the passive voice is used in the complementary phrase in brackets introducing extra information:

- a) ‘If the latter knows nothing about the absent sitter except his name (given by the experimenter), he cannot possibly give any clues, conscious or unconscious, far less ask leading questions’.

Further, in the next two examples the passive is used in non-finite form and the statement is introduced by the verb in passive:

- a) ‘Given a theological lead, I asked what he thinks about those who find a religious significance to his plays’;  
b) ‘Given a small ball or marbles, he would invent games and play by himself for hours’.

Another two examples have been found in legal contexts:

- a) 'He was caught driving the day after the sentence was pronounced and given a warning';
- b) 'Information is hereby given that Mr Timothy Palmer of Newburyport, Mass. Has agreed to take charge of the concerns of the Patentees of the Chain Bridge, in the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, so far as relates to the sale of Patent rights and the construction of Chain Bridges'.

Then, in the BNC Written similar results for the participle II form given in passive have been found. In the statements, in which passives were found, be-passives in various tenses were identified. First, quite a lot of examples have been found in texts related to politics, for instance:

- a) 'If such aids are given by EC member states, then this could clearly distort the process of competition within the SEM, a fundamental tenet of which is the creation of equality in trading opportunities';
- b) 'In the 1987 general election only 1.4 % of the second votes did not count, having been given to minute and therefore eliminated parties';
- c) 'Secondly, His Holiness the Dalai Lama should be given the ownership of Tibet'.

The next examples have been taken from legal contexts:

- a) 'The second, and more important, cause of action that English law now allows on death is the independent cause of action given to the near relatives of the deceased who have been deprived of his or her support or services';
- b) 'The self-regulatory requirements on management under the Health and Safety at Work Act should ensure that discipline is enforced and that all affected personnel are given an opportunity to maintain and improve their working environment'.

In the first example non-finite form of passive voice is applied and the agent of the action is not mentioned in the sentence. In the second example be-passive can be perceived, which occurs frequently in the examples collected for the present study.

After that, the last examples from the BNC Written related to history:

- a) 'They would then be exposed before the kinsmen, complete with presents such as metal dishes, tools and beads given by their captors, to demonstrate that they were still in one piece, and even being treated well';
- b) 'He had just been given permission to take a post in West Germany';
- c) 'Napoleon, however, was given little time to enjoy his victory'.

In the first sample presented above, non-finite form of passive is used and the agent of the sentence is also introduced. In the second example the passive is in perfect tense and it is used with the verb *to have* as an auxiliary verb, and in the third example be-passive can be found.

Then, few examples from the BNC Spoken from various formal meetings, dealing, supposedly, with company's matters:

- a) 'Erm, the Body, the Body Shop staff were all give were all given training weren't they and, and a lot of details and they had a video that they use with them, perhaps that's the aspect that's not been looked at so well'.

As we can see from the example provided above, it has been taken from spoken discourse, and be-passive is typically applied in the statement. Then, the following example is from political context:

- a) 'Those who can't see a role for the trade unions and the Labour Party need to be given time to see the error of their ways'.

The passive voice construction in the example can also be perceived as be-passive and it is in Infinitive and the verb need functions as a modal verb. Finally, the last example from the corpus is from informal conversation and the passive voice construction can be also perceived as be-passive:

- a) 'I don't think men are given enough room to express their emotions and feelings about thing'.

Further, the next item searched in the corpora was the verb Participle II form *determined*. It has also occurred in quite formal texts and in various topics, for example, in marketing, finances and legal matters. Many examples from academic contexts have been found in the Brown Corpus, for example:

- a) 'In sentences, patterns of stress are determined by complex combinations of influences that can only be suggested here';
- b) 'The significance of these differences has not been studied nor has the existence of corresponding physiologic differences been determined';
- c) 'By this method it was determined that the normal pressure exerted by a sample of polybutene (molecular weight reported to be 770) was over half an atmosphere. The actual pressure was not determined because the pressure was beyond the upper limit of the apparatus on hand';

- d) 'More word class ratios determined in more languages will no doubt ultimately answer the question'.

In the samples above different forms of passive voice can be observed. In the first example the verb Participle is used in long passive since the agent is presented in the statement, while in the rest of examples short passives are used. The first example and the third example present the use of be-passives and in the second example passive is used in present perfect tense and with the auxiliary verb *have*. In the last example non-finite form of passive is used.

Then, some examples with the use of passive have been observed in texts connected to philosophy:

- a) 'In its place is a passionate consciousness grasped and molded to feelings of positive or negative values even as the actions of one's life are determined by constellations of process in which one is caught';
- b) 'Each will decide on his own course somewhere between these two extreme cases according to the sense of responsibility which is determined for him by the particular circumstances of his own life'.

Both the examples present the use of long passives because the agent is introduced in sentence in a complementary by-phrase and all the passive voice constructions are be-passives and in simple present tense.

Then, quite many examples with the use of passive can be found in legal contexts, for instance:

- a) 'Any fee so determined shall be entered as a part of such award, and payment thereof shall be made by the Secretary of the Treasury by deducting the amount thereof from the total amount paid pursuant to the award';
- b) 'If the case is thus determined by us to be domestic, the court has no jurisdiction'.

The first example presents the use of non-finite passive, and in the second example long passive is used, because the doer of the action is also mentioned in the statement.

Then, some samples with passive voice constructions have been found in contexts related to painting:

- a) 'The unit of form is determined subjectively, 'the Heart, by the way of the Breath, to the Line''.

In this example, be-passive construction in long passive form can be observed. The next examples have been found in texts connected to economics, finances, and trade:

- a) ‘Interest rates are determined by the board of directors of the bank with the approval of the Farm Credit Administration’;
- b) ‘The type of program desired can be determined by the nature and extent of the adjustments needed’;
- c) ‘The location of the latter now is determined for tax purposes at the time of registration, and it is now accepted practice to consider a motor vehicle as being situated where it is garaged’;

In the first two examples long passives are used, and the agents are presented in a by-phrase. The first sample is the example of the use of be-passives, while in the second sample be-passive construction is used with the modal verb *can*. In the next example the verb is used in be-passive construction and in short passive.

After that, some examples have occurred in contexts linked with cars and engines, for example:

- a) ‘Tire size can be determined in several ways but the one that is the easiest and as accurate as any is by measuring the effective radius of a wheel and tire assembly’;

In the example be-passive is used with a modal verb *can*. Further, not so many examples have occurred in the BNC Written but similarly with the Brown Corpus, the samples in the BNC Written mostly have been found in texts related to political, economic and legal issues.

First, a few examples from academic contexts:

- a) ‘In this paper there is an additional reason it would be unfortunate from the point of view of algebraic laws if the channel and variable alphabets of parallel processes are determined purely from the syntax of component processes’;
- b) ‘It is frequently possible that if one homoclinic orbit occurs at one parameter value, then certain general properties of an intermediate sequence of homoclinic orbits can be determined.’

In both examples be-passives occur, though in the last example be-passive construction is used with the modal verb *can*. Both are short passives, because the agent is not mentioned.

Then, an example from political texts:

- a) 'If some voters' choices are determined by the lottery of surnames, others are channelled by specific guidance'.

As we can see from the example above, be-passive and long passive is used in the example. Then, one example with passive voice construction from the context devoted to Rome Treaty:

- a) 'But success or failure for the entire project may have been determined long before then.'

In this example a complex passive voice construction can be perceived, and passive is used with a modal verb *may*, in present perfect tense and with an auxiliary *have*.

After that, some samples have been found in texts related to economics and finances:

- a) 'If cost has been determined using FIFO, LIFO, weighted average cost or a similar method, and the difference between historical cost and replacement cost of stocks is material, this amount should be disclosed in a note to the accounts';
- b) 'Price (Pc) and output (Qc) are determined by the intersection of the supply and demand curves at C.'

In the first example the verb Participle II is used in passive form and with the verb *have* as auxiliary, while in the second example the verb is used in be-passive construction and the agent is not omitted, so it is also long passive.

Finally, the only two examples occurring in the BNC Spoken with the verb in passive:

- a) 'It does actually say together with other said officers and committee members as shall be determined by a general meeting, so if we wish to elect or choose somebody else we can do';
- b) 'The degree of checking is determined by the section engineer responsible for the project'.

The verb occurs in long passives in the both constructions, and be-passives are applied in the both examples. The verb is used in passive voice construction with a modal verb *shall*.

Finally, the last verb examined in the research was the Participle II form told in the use of passive voice. Not surprisingly, it is more frequent than the previous verb, and it is used in various topics.

First, quite many examples have been found in the Brown Corpus in political contexts, for instance:

- a) ‘Man, we are told, is endowed with reason and is capable of distinguishing good from bad’;
- b) ‘You know Bang-Jensen was told the Committee was ‘to convey its views, suggestions and recommendations to the Secretary General’.

In the both examples be-passives in Simple Present tense occur, similarly with many samples presented previously. Then, many samples have been taken from, supposedly, fiction:

- a) ‘He didn’t have to be told his son looked like him’;
- b) ‘I felt that he looked at me coldly and appraisingly and seemed to be uncertain what his attitude towards me should be, but he did not say one word which might indicate that he had been told of advances to his wife’;

In the first example be-passive construction is applied and it is in Infinitive, while in the second – the Participle II is used with the verb *have* as the auxiliary verb and the passive voice construction can be considered as Perfect Passive, since it occurs in Past Perfect.

After that, some examples can be found in texts from research reports, for instance:

- a) ‘Those children, who can chin themselves, should be told to do one chin up each time they pass under it’;
- b) ‘Five subjects (12%) did not change until they had been told that some people have something happen to their arm, what that something was, and also were given a demonstration’;
- c) ‘These suggested interpretations were given by the subjects spontaneously when they were told that there were people who reacted differently than they had.’

As we can perceive, be-passive in Infinitive occurs in the first sample presented above, and it is used with a modal verb with strong modality should. Then, the passive voice construction in the second sample is used with the auxiliary have and it is used in Past Perfect. In the third sample be-passive in Present tense is applied and short passives occur in all the samples above.

Then, some examples occur in contexts related to music and dancing performances, for instance:

- a) 'He must construct transitions so that dancer who is told to lie prone one second and to leap wildly the next will have some physical preparation for the leap';
- b) 'But it is characteristic of him, we are told, 'his little artifice', to be able to introduce 'into a fairly vulgar and humorous piece of hackwork a sudden phrase of genuine creative art''.

In both samples provided above be-passives are applied and the verb occurs in short passive in both samples. Then, some examples from legal texts:

- a) 'Several defendants in the Summerdale police burglary trial made statements indicating their guilt at the time of their arrest, Judge James B. Parson was told in Criminal court yesterday';
- b) 'News of the legislative veto appeared in the New Orleans papers, and Henry and William became incensed by the fact that they had not been told of the attempt in advance'.

Be-passive voice construction and in short passive is used in the first example, and the verb Participle II form was used in passive in the second example with the auxiliary verb have, and it is also short passive.

Then, a few samples with passive have been found in contexts related to religion:

- a) 'It would doubtless be greatly surprised to be told that in failing to be ecumenical it is really failing to be the Church of Christ';
- b) 'It was a session at which all the youngsters were told to express their fears, to get them out in the open where they could talk about them freely'.

Similarly with many other examples provided previously, in the examples above be-passives in short passive form are applied but in the first example but in the first example the passive is used in Infinitive, and in the second example passive is used in Simple Present tense which occurs quite commonly in the samples collected from the corpora. Then, in the last example taken from context related to sports, be-passive is also used:

- a) 'This year, I am told, the CBS network will continue to abide by the rule but NBC will play to a conclusion here'.

Further, not so many examples have occurred in the BNC Written. Similarly with the Brown Corpus, some examples with the use of passive have been found in pieces of texts from fiction also in the BNC Written, for example:

- a) ‘The Lady Anne, I am told, is given to tantrums’;
- b) ‘These jokes should never be told to your friends at Hallowe’en, on a dark and stormy night gathered round a roaring log effect electric heater, or at any other time for that matter’.

The first sample is one more example of the use of be-passive, and in the second sample be-passive voice construction is used in Infinitive, with the modal verb *should* and in negative form. Then, some examples from political texts:

- a) ‘At a meeting in the Kremlin last Saturday, General Vladimir Kryuchkov, head of the KGB and one of the newest members of the politburo, implicitly admitted the lies that had been told about the role of the secret police in Stalin’s repression’;
- b) ‘Mr Endara was told of the planned attack, and asked for his support, which he apparently granted, saying that he was ready to become the new leader if the U.S. could topple the Noriega regime’.

Past Perfect tense is used in passive voice construction of the first example, and the verb Participle II is used in passive with the verb have as the auxiliary. In the other sample be-passives in Simple Present tense is applied. Then, the only example from academic context:

- a) ‘They are told about aids which can assist them and given time to discuss special problems’.

Another example with the use of be-passive form is taken from news report:

- a) ‘The trawler took him in tow and took him back to Falmouth, Cornwall, where he was arrested by police, Truro Crown Court was told’.

Then, the next example has been found in a fragment of text which, as it can be observed, is devoted to a description of the position of the women in the past. In this sample be-passive construction is also applied:

- a) ‘In general, however, women were sent back to their music and embroidery and were told to be submissive’.

Further, one example with be-passive in Infinitive, and the example has been found in context connected with dramatic plays:

- a) ‘To be told so little – to such an end – and still, finally, to be denied an explanation.’

The next two examples come from a text related to the myth of Isis and Osiris:

- a) ‘In so doing he permitted Isis to reveal the name to her son Horus but ordered that it must not be told to anyone else’;
- b) ‘The myth of Osiris must have been told and retold to eager audiences over many centuries and in many different ways’.

In both example passive is used with a modal verb of strong modality must, and the Participle II verb *told* occurs in be-passive construction and with the verb *have* as auxiliary respectively.

In the last example from the BNC Written the Participle II is also used with the auxiliary have in Present Perfect form:

- a) ‘Telefonica has 43.6% in Compania de Telefonos de Chile SA and 20% of Entel Chile SA, and has been told to sell one within 18 months’.

Then, finally, quite many examples have been found in the BNC Spoken, especially, from extracts from court hearings, for instance:

- a) ‘It wasn’t suggested to Mr when he gave evidence that there was another man at the flat that night, I am told that if it had been his answer would have been an unequivocal no’;
- b) ‘As I said I I had been told that er he was associated with and they had been planning armed robberies in the past’;

Be-passive also occurs in the first example and the verb is used in short passive and Simple Present form. In the last example the verb occurs in passive with auxiliary verb have and in Past Perfect form. In the last example long passive is used.

Further, some examples from meetings:

- a) ‘We’re told that erm, you know, the ma, the massive redundancies in places like Ferranti is due to erm, you know, those resolutions defence cutbacks’;
- b) ‘This fact reminds me of a tale I was told in the States recently whereby President Clinton and his wife Hilary and Major Kay drove into a garage, quite why this

was necessary the tale does not relate, as the petrol or gas attendant began to fill up the limousine, Hilary Clinton leaped out of the car and became involved in an animated conversation with the patrol attendant’;

- c) ‘What I wanted to say was that when I read the Annual Report I was rather surprised to find that there is no reference to the report of the committee under the chairmanship of Bob, Bob on the organization of the R Y A and then I realized that it probably didn’t come to the Council till after the end of the year that we have under consideration but it did seem to me that it has some contentious and some very interesting and rather good points in it and I wonder if we could be told how the consideration of it is getting on’.

The verb Participle II is used in be-passive and Simple Present tense in the first two examples, while be-passive is used in Infinitive and with a modal verb could in the third example.

After that, one example from contexts related to religious matters:

- a) ‘Well, I am told that that is the earliest thing at all’.

Then, the last, a sample from political texts in which, as we can see, long passive is used:

- a) ‘I I can’t understand the secretariat allowing this to come out were told by the president that it was not possible to use this money unless it grant related’;

Finally, the passives selected for the investigation occur in various topics, which can be observed from the sources provided by the corpora. Some of the most frequent topics are politics, academic research, law and others and few examples related to other topics can be observed. In addition, the type of texts compiled in corpora should be considered, namely, it should be taken into consideration that the corpora often contain particular types of texts, for example, research reports, various publications and so forth. The next chapter represents the main findings of the research.

### ***3.1. Findings***

Not many researchers have shown interest in exploration of topic-dependent use of passive voice although some particular verbs can be used in certain registers. The subchapter represents the most significant findings of the research.

On analysing the results, it should be taken into account that passive voice is more commonly used in formal register than in conversations, although the largest part of the texts, which can be found in corpora, are in formal style. Thus the samples of sentences with passive constructions have been found mostly in formal texts. The verbs with their contexts have mostly been found in various formal written or spoken texts, for instance, in academic research, scientific articles, news reports, fiction, formal speeches, and meetings and in other sources and the frequency of the use of passive differs across the disciplines.

Then, the largest number of examples have been observed in research articles, legal registers and in texts concerning politics. Many other topics, in which the passives occur, have been identified and the results are quite diverse for each item. As it can be observed from the examples with the use of passive, be-passives and short passives have occurred most frequently. No any use of get-passive has been identified in the examples in the corpora. So that the observations by Biber and his contributors can be proved.

The first item searched in corpora has been the Participle II form of the verb 'to know'. The passive form of the verb has been observed in such topics as, academic research, description of some persons, history, in research reports, in formal speeches, sports and others. After that, considerably many samples observed in texts connected with politics.

Then, the passive form 'approved' of the next verb investigated in the research has been found mostly in formal and legal texts referred to validation of something, for example, approving a plan, a project, a claim, or passing a law and so forth. As it is mentioned previously, the verb 'to approve' occurs permanently in formal register. On the investigation of the sources provided by the corpora involved in the research, several topics have been perceived, but the main topics were passing a law or validation of some plan or action.

Further, samples with the Participle 'given' have been observed. Similarly with the previous two verb forms, the participle form 'given' occurs in such subjects

as law, politics, and in academic research. Though some other subjects have been identified, for instance, an example has been found in a fragment of text devoted to some matters of religion, then, many examples from texts related to help programmes for impaired children, or in pharmacy and a couple of examples from the text related to a description of some hair care product.

Then, the next verb searched for the use in passive was the verb ‘determined’. It also occurs mostly in very formal texts related to law, finances, economics and other fields. The verb is used permanently in long passives, because the agent of the sentence is not excluded. Very few examples with the use of the verb in short passives have been found.

After that, the last verb searched in the corpora was the verb ‘told’. Since it can be used in formal and not so formal discourses, it has occurred in texts dealing with various topics. Many examples can be found in academic or political texts, and considerably many examples have been found in the BNC Spoken in comparison with other verbs. The examples with the use of passive have been found in extracts from court hearings and formal meetings.

To summarise, several passive verb forms have been collected from the corpora and various subjects of the texts, in which the samples occurred, have been considered. Quite a wide range of topics has been considered and the results for each item are fairly different. Furthermore, the results slightly vary for each corpus. In the end, the results of the practical part of the research suggest that the use of passive voice can be influenced by topic and in the next chapter the research results are reviewed and their significance is considered.

### ***3.2. Discussion***

The present paper was aimed to explore the use of passive voice according to subject in the sources provided by corpora. So that passive voice forms of five verbs have been analysed taking into consideration the texts in which they occurred.

Passive voice in English has been much explored by linguists, but they have drawn attention mostly to its grammatical peculiarities and relations with syntax. Furthermore, many scholars discuss the use of passive voice in academic writing and

a lot of academics contradict extensive use of passive in research reports. Various aspects of passive voice have been investigated, but there are no much studies made on topic-dependent use of passive. The results of the present study point at possible influence of topic on the use of passive, so that further studies in the field are recommended. Topic-dependent use of passive voice is one of the most significant issues in linguistic studies; therefore, it can be perceived as another subject that should be investigated further. In the section below, the conclusions that author of the present research has drawn on the basis of her finding are presented.

## **Conclusions**

The present study has been related to investigation of topic-dependent use in passive voice and the sources in corpora have been analysed for occurrence of passive voice depending on the topic. At the beginning of the research, the hypothesis has been stated that the use of passive voice in various topics is different. For instance, the use of passive in the topics related to social sciences will differ than in some completely other topic. A particular number of various verb participle II forms have been selected from the books related to English grammar studies by Biber and his contributors. Then, the verbs have been searched in the corpora, which have been selected for the research via online program *Compleat Lexical Tutor* and the samples, which have been considered to be the most relevant for analysis, were collected. After that, the subjects, in which the passives occurred, have been considered and various topics have been identified in the examples from the corpora. The topics, in which each of the passives were found, quite vary for each verb, for example, the verb ‘determined’ has been perceived mostly in legal contexts and various documents, or the verb ‘told’ in academic contexts and in fiction. All the examples for the use of passive from the BNC Spoken have been found mostly in extracts from meetings or, supposedly, political speeches, and quite many examples from the BNC Spoken have occurred in extracts from court hearings. According to the results, we can conclude that the use of passive can be also dependent on the topic, in which it is applied and the research hypothesis can be considered as approved.

## Theses

1. Passive voice is defined as a grammatical category of voice and one of the main differences between passive voice and active voice is basically grammatical.
2. Passive voice is traditionally more often applied in formal texts, and it occurs in written communication more frequently than in spoken communication.
3. The frequency of the use of passive voice can vary across the disciplines and passive voice is used not very often in conversation.
4. Passive voice is used intensively in academic writing, legal discourse, and in news reports not only to gain objectivity but also in cases when mentioning the doer of the action is not so important.
5. Short passives are used considerably more frequently than long passives, so that the agent or the subject is not mentioned in a statement.
6. Be-passives are the most commonly used passive voice constructions. Get-passives are extremely rare and are used with few particular verbs.
7. Verb Participle II forms can be used in passive voice constructions with modal verbs or with such verbs as *become*, *have*, *make* and others functioning as auxiliary verbs.
8. Some verbs can be used more frequently in highly formal texts for example, in legal texts, while some verbs can occur in formal or not so formal texts.
9. The verbs in passive voice constructions can be distinguished in a wide range of topics, and the results for all the items collected for the current research slightly vary for each corpus.
10. The results of the research suggest that the use of passive voice can depend on the topic in which it is applied, and further studies in topic-dependent use of passive voice are recommended.

## References

1. Baratta A., M., (2009) Revealing Stance through Passive Voice, *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 41, Issue 7, 1406-1421pp
2. Barber E. J. W., (1975) Voice – Beyond the Passive, *Proceedings of the First Annual of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, pp16-24
3. Bennet P., (1995) *A Course in Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar*, *Studies in Computational Linguistics*: London: UCL Press Ltd.
4. Biber D., Johansson S., Leech G., Conrad S., Finegan E., (1999) *Grammar of Spoken and Written English*: Longman
5. Biber D., Conrad S., Leech G. (2002) *Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*: Longman
6. Blokh M. Y. (1994) *A Course in Theoretical English Grammar*, Second Edition: Москва: ВЪисшая Школа
7. Butt M., Holloway King T., (2001) Soft Constraints Mirror Hard Constraints: Voice and Person in English and Lummi, *Proceedings of the LFG01 Conference*, CSLI Publications
8. Buysens E. (1979) The Active Voice with Passive Meaning in Modern English: *English Studies*, Vol. 60, Issue 6, p745
9. Chalker S., Weiner E. (1994) *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar, The New Authoritative Guide*: Oxford University Press
10. Chomsky N. (1957) *Syntactic Structures*: Mouton de Gryter
11. Collins, C., (2005) A Smuggling Approach to the Passive in English: *Syntax*, Vol. 8, Issue 2, p81-120
12. Comrie B., (1988) *Passive and Voice*: John Benjamins Publishing Company
13. Cowles H., W., Ferreira V. S. (2012) The Influence of Topic Status on Written and Spoken Sentence Production, *Discourse Processes*, 49:1-28: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group
14. Downing A., Locke P., (2006) *English Grammar, A University Course*, Second Edition: Routledge
15. Halliday M. A. K., Webster J. J. (2009) *Continuum Companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics*: Continuum

16. Hinkel E., (2009) The effects of Essay Topics on Modal Verb Uses in L1 and L2 Academic Writing, *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 41, Issue 4, p667-683
17. Huddleston R. (1984) *Introduction to the Grammar of English*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
18. Johnson-Laird, P. N., (1968b) Shorter Articles and Notes The Interpretation of The Passive Voice, *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 20, Issue 1: Taylor & Francis Group
19. Johnson-Laird P., N., (1968a) The Choice of the Passive Voice in a Communicative Task, *British Journal of Psychology*, 59:1, pp7-15
20. Kučera H., Francis W. N., (1967) *Computational Analysis of Present Day American English*, Brown University Press
21. Leong P. A. (2014) The Passive Voice in Scientific Writing. The Current Norm in Science Journals, *JCOM: Journal of Science Communication*
22. McEnery T., Hardie A., (2012) *Corpus Linguistics: Method. Theory and Practice*: Cambridge University Press
23. McEnery T., Xiao R. and Tono Y. (2006) *Corpus-based Language Studies, An Advanced Resource Book*: Routledge
24. McEnery T., Wilson A. (2001) *Corpus Linguistics: An Introduction*: Edinburgh University Press
25. Pinker S., (2014) Passive Resistance. *Atlantic*, Vol. 314, Issue 4,
26. Pruitt D. J., (1968) Passive Voice Should be avoided by Research Writers, *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 39, No. 8, pp460-464: Ohio State University Press
27. Reed L., (2011) Get-passives, *Linguistic Review*, Vol. 28, Issue 1, p41-78
28. Sigel T. (2009) How Passive Voice Weakens Your Argument, *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 28 Issue 5, p478-489
29. Stoica I. (2008) *Corpus Linguistics, Research Starters Education*, Online Edition
30. Svartvik J. (1985) *On Voice in the English Verb*: De Gryter
31. Svartvik J., ed., (1992) *Corpus Linguistics Comes of Age, Directions in Corpus Linguistics, Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs [TILSM]. Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 82 Stockholm, 4-8 August 1991*: Mouton De Gryter

32. Swan M. (2000) Practical English Usage, New Edition: Oxford University Press
33. Tognini-Bonelli E., (2001) Corpus Linguistics at Work: John Benjamins Publishing Company
34. Toyota J., (2009) Fossilisation of Passive in English: Analysis of Passive Verbs: English Studies, Vol. 90, Issue 4, pp 476-497
35. Wallis S., Nelson G., (1997) Syntactic Parsing as a Knowledge Acquisition Problem, Knowledge Acquisition, Modelling and Management Lecture Notes in Computer Science, Vol. 1319, pp285-300
36. Wallis S., Nelson G., (2001) Knowledge Discovery in Grammatically Analysed Corpora, Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery, Vol. 5, Issue 4, pp305-335: Kluwer Academic Publishers
37. Wanner A., (2009) Deconstructing the English Passive, Topics in English Linguistics: De Gryter Mouton
38. Woltag L. (2015) Active and Passive Voice, Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature: Salem Press

#### **Online sources:**

1. Compleat Lexical Tutor: Corpus Concordance English:  
<http://www.lextutor.ca/conc/eng/> [Accessed on April 17<sup>th</sup>]
2. The British National Corpus: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/> [Accessed on April 10<sup>th</sup>]
3. The British National Corpus: Free British national Corpus Information:  
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O29-BRITISHNATIONALCORPUS.html> [Accessed on April 10<sup>th</sup>]
4. The Brown Corpus, Free Brown Corpus, the Information:  
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O29-BROWNCORPUSThe.html>  
[Accessed on April 10<sup>th</sup> ]
5. Brown Corpus Manual: <http://clu.uni.no/icame/brown/bcm.html> [Accessed on April 11<sup>th</sup>]
6. CoRD The Brown Corpus:  
<http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/BROWN/> [Accessed on April 11<sup>th</sup> ]

## Dokumentārā lapa

Bakalaura darbs ‘‘Topic-dependent Use of Passive in English Corpora’’ (No Tēmas Atkarīgs Ciešamās Kārtas Lietojums Angļu Valodas Korpusos) izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

Autors: Elīna Freimane

27.05. 2015.

Rekomendēju/nerekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai:

Vadītāja: profesore Natalja Cigankova

27.05.2015.

Recenzents:

Studiju metodiķe:

27.05.2015.

Darbs iesniegts Anglistikas nodaļā

27. 05.2015

Darbs aizstāvēts bakalaura gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

2015. gada ..... jūnijā, prot. Nr....., vērtējums.....