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Passive Voice in Scientific Style

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Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :

Studentka se ve své diplomové práci zaměří na použití trpného rodu v anglickém jazyce, jejím hlavním cílem bude prostudovat výskyt a možnosti využití trpného rodu v anglickém odborném stylu. Na základě studia relevantní literatury z oblasti morfologie a syntaxe nejprve vymezí pojem pasívum, bude charakterizovat specifické rysy této slovesné kategorie a její funkce. Následně provede analýzu nashromážděných anglických odborných textů s cílem zmapovat frekvenci výskytu trpného rodu a jeho funkce. V analýze se bude soustředit nejen na kvantitativní hodnocení zkoumaného vzorku, ale zejména na objasnění použití trpného rodu z hlediska stylistiky, sémantiky a funkční větné perspektivy.

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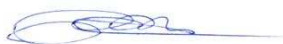
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Abstract

This thesis named *Passive Voice in Scientific Style* focuses on usage of the passive voice especially in its first theoretical part and on its occurrence in scientific style in the second practical part.

The theoretical part of the thesis is devoted to the description of the passive and its relation to the active voice not only from the grammatical but also from the semantic viewpoint. The process of passivization is explained in the first part. Active constructions having passive meaning are presented as well as borderline cases. The thesis clarifies the factors that determine the usage and formation of the passive voice. The aspects are discussed from the viewpoint of grammar, stylistics, semantics and functional sentence perspective.

The practical part presents the results of the research. It compares the occurrence of the active and passive verb phrases from selected scientific texts. The detailed description of the passive constructions provides lexico-grammatical and functional analysis.

Key words

passive, active, agent, scientific style, functional sentence perspective

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se nazývá *Trpný rod v anglickém odborném stylu*. V její první teoretické části je zaměřena převážně na používání trpného rodu a v druhé praktické části na jeho výskyt v odborném stylu.

Teoretická část této diplomové práce se věnuje popisu trpného rodu a jeho vztahu s činným rodem. Tento popis je založen nejen na pohledu gramatickém, ale rovněž na pohledu sémantickém. Dále je zde objasněn proces pasivizace. Tato práce také zmiňuje konstrukce v činném rodě, které mají trpný význam, stejně tak uvádí okrajové případy pasíva a osvětluje okolnosti, které určují použití a tvoření trpného rodu. Na tyto aspekty je nahlíženo z hlediska gramatického, stylistického, sémantického a z hlediska funkční větné perspektivy.

Praktická část předkládá výsledky výzkumu a porovnává použití činných a trpných slovesných frází ve vybraných textech odborného stylu. A nakonec detailní popis trpných konstrukcí podává analýzu z pohledu lexikálně-gramatického a z pohledu funkce pasívu.

Klíčová slova

trpný rod, činný rod, agens, odborný styl, funkční větná perspektiva

I.

I. Introduction

According to the Webster's Dictionary (1994, 720-21), a large number of commentators agree that the sentence in which the verb is in the active voice are given preference over the ones with the passive voice. The passive has long been discouraged as it was said to be the weaker form of expression. In many handbooks of technical or scientific writing, we can see that it is recommended to avoid using the passive voice as much as possible and to use the active. However, as it is stated in the Webster's Dictionary, the use of the passive has increased and the studies show that the passive is much more frequently used by the educated than by the uneducated.

The passive voice is a typical grammatical feature of scientific writing and thanks to its possibility of not expressing the originator of the action and at the same time the ability to focus on the patient and action themselves it is favoured in texts that require objectivity and impersonal and emotionless approach. Consequently, "the sentences cast in the passive voice have their uses and are an important tool for the writer" (ibid.), but they should not be overused.

As almost every paper concerning scientific writing mentions the passive as one of its characteristics, I have decided to focus on this phenomenon in order to determine how, when and why it is used. This thesis has two parts – theoretical and practical one, each approaches it differently.

The theoretical part deals with the definition of the passive voice and its relation to the active voice in Chapter 1. The following chapter explains how the passive voice is formed and describes the process of passivization; at the same time it mentions different types of active constructions that have passive meaning. Chapter 3 clarifies various lexical and grammatical conditions (verbs, subject and agent constraints) that allow or on the other hand prohibit forming the passive voice. In Chapter 4, the attention is paid to the semantic factor, particularly the meaning of active and passive counterparts and dynamic and stative meaning of passive constructions. Chapter 5 is devoted to the function of the passive and its distribution across registers.

The practical part of the thesis is analytical. At the beginning, it introduces the research (Chapter 6) and presents the characteristics of scientific style (Chapter 7). The

main focus of the subsequent chapters is to present the outcomes of the text analysis. Chapter 8 deals with the frequency of the passive and active voice in the analysed samples. The following chapters (9 – 11) describe the passive sentence from the lexico-grammatical and functional point of view. The last chapter of the thesis evaluates the conclusion of the analysis and summarizes this work.

II. Theoretical part

1. Active versus passive

1.1 Voice

The system of voice in English belongs to the verbal group, which is one of the most complex areas of the English grammar. The system of voice belongs to the eight principal systems relevant to the verbal group: finiteness, modality, tense, polarity, aspect, voice, contrast and focus. (Muir, 1972, p.131)

At the beginning, I would like to introduce the principal terms **voice**, and its types, which are classified as **active voice** and **passive voice**. In a monolingual dictionary, such as Webster's II, the term *voice* is described as a verb form showing the relation between the subject and the action expressed by the verb. (Webster's II, 1984)

According to the grammarians, **voice** is a grammatical category which makes it possible to view the action of a sentence in two ways: in **active** (*The butler murdered the detective*) and **passive** (*The detective was murdered by the butler*) voice (Quirk, 1984, p.801). Another definition interprets voice as a term applying to a system in which the contrasting forms differ in the way semantic roles are aligned with syntactic functions. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, p.1727) The two types of voice differ such a way that the elements in each voice although having different syntactic functions (subject, object) their semantic roles (cause of the event, receiver or affected entity) remain the same.

In English, voice is divided into two types – **active** and **passive** voice. According to the Webster's II dictionary, the **active** voice is a verb inflction or voice indicating that the subject of the sentence is performing or causing the action expressed by the verb, while the **passive** denotes a verb form that is used to indicate that the grammatical subject is the object of the action or the effect of the verb. (Webster's II, 1984)

There is relation and correspondence between the two voices. The passive involves a structural reorganization of the active clause. It can be described as a systematic means of choosing a participant other than the agent as the starting-point for a message,

but still it keeps the word order with a subject in the initial position. The active *The butler murdered the detective* is reorganized in the passive sentence *The detective was murdered by the butler.* The passive phrase *the detective* in the initial position is not the agent or performer although it is a subject of the clause located at the beginning. (Biber and Quirk, 1999, p.154)

1.2 Relation between active and passive

As for the linguistic approach, the relation between active and passive concerns two grammatical levels – the verb phrase and the clause. A passive verb phrase (a form of the auxiliary *be* followed by the past participle of the main verb) contrasts with an active verb phrase, which does not contain that construction. The list of all the passive verb phrases that occur in ordinary English as well as with their active forms is presented below. (Quirk, 1984, p.801; Swan, 1996, p.407)

	Active (*to kiss*)	Passive (*to be kissed*)
Present simple:	*kisses*	*is kissed*
Present progressive:	*is kissing*	*is being kissed*
Past simple:	*kissed*	*was kissed*
Past progressive:	*was kissing*	*was being kissed*
Modal:	*may kiss*	*may be kissed*
Present perfective:	*has kissed*	*has been kissed*
Past perfective:	*had kissed*	*had been kissed*
Will future:	*will kiss*	*will be kissed*
Future perfective:	*will have kissed*	*will have been kissed*
Going to future:	*is going to kiss*	*is going to be kissed*
Modal + perfective	*may have kissed*	*may have been kissed*

Passive voice can be applied in all English common tenses (present, past, future) as well as in their perfective and progressive forms. It is not by any chance used exclusively in a certain tense or aspect. Apparently, the list does not show all the English verb forms, which indicates that there are restrictions: future progressive (*will*

be being kissed) and perfective progressive (*has been being kissed*) are unusual. (Swan, 1996, p.408)

At the clause level, the two voices differ in the arrangement of clause elements – changing the active to the passive entails rearrangement of the two clause elements (subject, object) and one addition (by-phrase). (Quirk, 1985, p.159)

The process of passivization carries four main features as presented below. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 1427) give an example of an active clause and its passive counterpart:

active: *Pat stole my surfboard.*

passive: *My surfboard was stolen by Pat.*

The representative pair differs in four ways:

    i.   The subject of the active *Pat* becomes in the passive an agent (in Huddleston and Pullum termed as the *internalized complement*) with the preposition *by* before it, called *by-agent phrase*.

   ii.   The object of the active *my surfboard* becomes the subject of the passive.

  iii.   The verb of the active *stole* is formed into past participle in the passive *stolen*.

  iv.   The passive contains an extra verb, the auxiliary *be*.

(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1427-8; Quirk, 1985, p.725)

Although the transformation of voice entails change of the sentence structure as in the examples above (*Pat* and *my surfboard* change their positions and syntactic functions), the meaning of the sentence remains the same. In *Pat stole my surfboard* and *My surfboard was stolen by Pat*, *Pat* is in both voices the 'performer of the action'. In the sentences structure, however, the active subject corresponds to the passive agent. (Quirk, 1984, p.802)

The grammarians agree on the fact that the position of the active subject and object changes when undergoing the process of passivization, as well as that the verb phrase is specific for the passive voice.

However, Quirk does not use expressions in terms of internalization and externalization whereas Huddleston does, as explained in the following paragraphs. The

author employs the terminology as in i. and ii., which are subject, object in the active, direct and indirect object, by-agent or agent in the passive. The terms 'subject', 'object', and 'agent' are used to refer to elements with a particular structural function in the clause.

Huddleston's and Pullum's terminology differs as they do not present the passive voice using expressions subject or agent. Firstly, in connection with the following paragraph, it is necessary to explain what Huddleston labels as an **external** and **internal complement**. The external complement is used to mark the subject. The modifier **external** indicates its position because it is located outside the verb phrase. It is an obligatory element in all canonical clauses. "The object, by contrast, is an external complement, it is permitted and licensed by some verbs (but not by others)" (Huddleston, 1993, p.53).

Taking into consideration Huddleston's terminology explained above, the use and meaning of expressions concerning the passive employed by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p.1428) are comprehensible. I will focus on the features i. and ii., which were mentioned earlier in this chapter. The authors use the term **internalised complement** for the **agent**. In the active the subject *Pat* is an external complement – external to the verb phrase. However, in the passive it is moved and used in the *by*-phrase. It becomes internal to the verb phrase, hence the term **internalized complement**.

Moreover, the phrase *by Pat* is a prepositional phrase, not a noun phrase, which means it does not function as an object. Thus changing the active to the passive is a process when a transitive clause becomes intransitive. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1428 - 9)

Just as the subject, an external complement in the active appears internal to the verb phrase in the passive, so the direct object is internal complement in the active and in the passive it functions as a subject, thus it is external to the verb phrase. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1428 - 9)

The linguists' terminology differs in some areas, however, in many instances the linguists agree on the terms they use. In this work, especially Quirk's terminology will be used in general while taking into consideration different views by other linguists.

To clarify the definition of voice that I accept, this chapter can be summed up by saying that voice is a grammatical category that distinguishes the semantic role of the subject in a clause. It has two types: the active having its subject in the role of an originator of the action expressed by the verb and the passive in which the subject has the role of a patient. In the passive, the originator of the action is put in the position behind the verb introduced with a *by* preposition and it is called the agent. The verb in passive has its typical form consisting of *be* and past participle. Using the passive has its limitations not concerning only the area of morphology, which it will be paid attention to in the next chapters, but also mainly syntax and stylistics, which will be dealt with afterwards.

2. Formation of the passive

Since it has been described in Chapter 1.2 that the object of an active clause becomes the subject of its passive counterpart, it is evident that such a change is possible with transitive verbs only, i.e. verbs always used with a direct object.
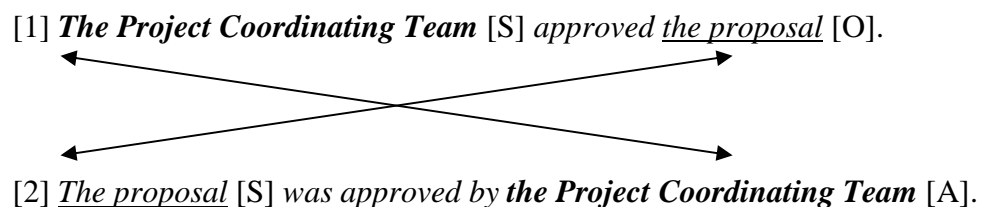
Ditransitive verbs, i.e. verbs having direct and indirect object can form the passive too. It is often possible to make either object the subject in a corresponding passive clause, hence there may be two passive counterparts. (Quirk, 1985, p.727)

Most passive constructions are formed with the auxiliary verb *be* (**be-passive**) followed by the **past participle** (*-ed* participle) of the main verb: *Mary was* (past tense of *be*) *admired by John*. Besides the auxiliary *be*, we can find other verbs that comprise the passive verb form, which will be dealt with later in this chapter.

The auxiliary *be* carries the inflectional properties carried by the main verb in the active clause, with the exception for the person and number properties because they are determined by the agreement with the subject in the passive clause. Thus, in a sentence *John admired the girls* and in its passive counterpart *The girls were admired by John*, *admired* is a past tense form and *was* (*admired*) takes over the past tense inflection, while the number agrees with the passive subject *the girls*, which is in plural, *the girls* is the 3rd person and it agrees with the auxiliary. (Huddleston, 1993, p.439)

Passive constructions are possible with most transitive verbs (exceptions and restrictions will be discussed later). The noun phrase which is an object in the active

clause in [1] usually corresponds with the noun phrase in the role of subject in a passive construction in [2]. At the same time, the noun phrase functioning as a subject in the active voice [1] is included in a by-phrase functioning as the *agent* in [2]:

[1] **The Project Coordinating Team** [S] *approved <u>the proposal</u>* [O].

[2] <u>*The proposal*</u> [S] *was approved by* **the Project Coordinating Team** [A].

In the sentence above, the agent is expressed in the passive construction [2]. Such construction containing a by-phrase (*by the Project Coordinating Team)* is called the **long passive**. In contrast, the passive constructions without a *by*-phrase are called **short passives** or **agentless passives**: *The proposal was approved* or another example *My surfboard was stolen*. (Biber and Quirk. 1999, p.475; Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1428)

As explained, the passive verb form consists of two parts: *be* and past participle in the case of *be*-passives. However, there are more verbs that can be connected with the past participle in order to function as a passive verb form. Another type of passive is called the **get-passive,** which uses a form of the verb *get* instead of the verb *be*. Get takes the same inflectional properties as the auxiliary *be* would do. *Get*-passive is not as common as *be*-passive though. Chapter 4 will deal with *get*-passives in details.

Other copular verbs such as *become*, *look*, *remain*, *seem* can replace *be* in the structure. In this case, the past participle has an adjectival use: *The modern world is getting/ becoming more highly industrialized and mechanized.* (Quirk, 1985, p.170) Concerning the structure, these passives together with *get*-passives, unlike *be*-passives, require the auxiliary *do* in questions and negatives. (McEnery, 2006)

Together with *be*-passives and *get*-passives, there exist passives that contain none of the auxiliary or copular verbs but only the full verbs in the past participle form. These are called **bare passives**. They are non-finite verb forms occurring in subordinate clauses. Bare passive clauses usually have no overt subject: *They saw John <u>mauled by our neighbour's dog</u>*. *John* is syntactically an object in the main clause. An example where a bare passive does have an overt subject is seen in <u>*All things considered*</u>*, he is*

very lucky to have survived. The examples show that bare passives may or may not have an expressed agent. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1430) Biber and Quirk describe functions of non-finite passive constructions. They can postmodify a noun: *The major weather factors <u>involved</u> are apparently temperature and precipitation.* They function as complements (e.g. verb complements): *We know with some confidence, that if greenhouse gases continue <u>to be emitted</u> in their present quantities, we will experience unprecedented rates of sea-level rise.* (Biber; Quirk, 1999, p.936)

2.1 Active with passive meaning

Formal features of passive have been discussed so far. Nevertheless, we can find instances that formally are active voice but expressing a passive meaning. They are called **notional passives** (also **middle voice**). E.g. *The clothes wash well* can be an equivalent to *The clothes are washed well.* Verbs possible to be used in this way are e.g. *sell, bake, boil.* These verbs are classified as **ergative verbs** divided in four categories – verbs that suggest changing of state (*Some kinds of food soon spoil*) , verbs involving vehicles (*The brake does not grip properly*), verbs of cooking (*The tea is brewing*) and of physical movement (*The door won't lock*). The verbs are transitive in general but they are used intransitively having a passive sense. (Wang, 2007) Although there are hundreds of ergative verbs in English, the frequency of notional passive is low. Application of the passive voice in this case is according to some linguists (Dušková, 1994, p.255) impossible in order to maintain the meaning. "The active form indicates the inherent property of these clothes (i.e. they can be washed well) whereas the passive form expresses a different meaning (i.e. they are washed well on a particular occasion)" (McEnery, 2006). (Wang, 2007; McEnery, 2006)

Another case that is regarded as passive, according to Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p.1429) is a construction containing the verb *need* and a gerund as in *This draft needs <u>checking</u> carefully by the editor.* Since the sentence can be paraphrased as *The article needs <u>to be checked</u> by the editor* and moreover it contains a *by*-phrase, it can be established as the passive. Generally said, the construction *need doing* corresponds to *need to be done*.

3. Voice constraints

It has been mentioned above that the passive constructions are generally formed with transitive verbs, which means that transitive verbs can be either active or passive. Nevertheless, even if there is a basic rule, there are exceptions which limit the possibility of passivization and systematic correspondence between the active and passive sentences. These restrictions will be described in the following paragraphs.

3.1 Verb constraints

Chapter 2 explained the process of passivization pointing out that auxiliary *be* or other verbs such as *get* or *become* together with a transitive main verb form a passive verb phrase. The character of the main verb is of an importance since it affects the possibility to occur in the passive or active.

3.1.1 Active only

Although this work focuses on the passive voice, it is essential to mention instances that do not allow its use. The number of verbs that occur in the passive is restricted, which makes it evident that there exist verbs occurring in the active only. Among these belong copular verbs (linking verbs – verbs linking a subject to its complement) and intransitive verbs. Having no object to form the passive subject, they can never take the passive. However, there is a small group of verbs, called **middle verbs,** that appear to be transitive, they are followed by a noun phrase, yet do not normally allow occurrence in the passive. The most common of them is *have*, others are *lack*, *fit*, *cost*, *weigh*, *equal*, *measure*, *possess*, *suit*, and *resemble*. (Quirk, 1985, p. 162, 735; Jacobs, 1995, p.163)

  [3] *They <u>have</u> a nice house. Dennis <u>lacks</u> confidence. The coat doesn't <u>fit</u> me.*

  NOT *A nice house is had by them. Confidence is lacked by Dennis. I'm not fitted by the coat.*

All these verbs refer to states rather than actions or processes. Jacobs point out that some middle verbs, however, can also refer to an action or an event, thus they have their passive counterparts ([4] *The customs officials weighed twenty pounds of rice. ~ Twenty pounds of rice were weighed by the customs officials.*). The most common middle verb is *have*, which in its idiomatic use has both active and passive forms ([5] *Everyone had a good time. ~ A good time was had by everyone.*). This passive refers to the result of action or event rather than just to a state, it refers to something that has happened. (Jacobs, 1995, p.163-4)

On the other hand, there are other stative verbs, such as those of volition or attitude, that can easily form the passive ([6] *The police want him. ~ He is wanted by the police.* (Quirk, 1985, p. 162).

Verbs which are logically '**symmetrical**' (*resemble, equal*, *marry*) are not likely, for some speakers even not possible, to be passivized. "For example, *marry* in the sense 'enter into matrimony with' is logically symmetrical in that *X married Y* entails and is entailed by *Y married X*, for any value of *X* and *Y*" (Huddleston, 1993, p.440). If in passive constructions ([7] *Kim was married by Chris.*), they are considered to be awkward or unacceptable.

Prepositional verbs (discussed later in this chapter) can form the passive, nevertheless, some of them are mainly used in the active ([8] *Everybody agreed with me.* NOT *I was agreed with by everybody.*). (Swan, 1996, p.409).

3.1.2 Passive only

Conversely, with some verbs and verb constructions only the passive is possible. A group of verbs taking an object and *to*-infinitive complementation contains some verbs occurring in the passive exclusively (*repute, rumour, say, see, think*) (Quirk, 1985, p.1203; Swan, 1996, p. 413):

[9] *John was said / reputed to be a good teacher.*

NOT *They said / reputed him to be a good teacher.*

Other examples like *be born* (with an irregular past participle) are found only in short passives [10], and *be drowned* (in cases where no agent is implied) [11]. (Quirk,

1985, p.162, 1203; Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1436) Verbs like *be based on, be deemed, be positioned* and *be subjected to* are grammatical in both the active and passive voice, but they are mainly (over 90%) found in the passive form [12]. (Biber and Quirk, 1999, p.480-1)

[10]   *He <u>was born</u> in Tübingen.*

[11]   *The wanted man fell into the water and <u>was drowned</u>.*

[12]   *This part can then <u>be positioned</u> within another space.*

Some speakers consider *take ill* as being also restricted to the passive as in *They were taken ill* (meaning 'became ill') (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1436).

3.1.3   Ditransitive verbs

In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that the passive voice can be formed also with ditransitive verbs – verbs that require both direct and indirect object. According to Gethin (1992, p.156), these verbs are divided in three groups. The first group contains verbs (*give*, *refuse*) of which either object can become the subject of the corresponding passive [13]. Some of these verbs allow but not prescribe the preposition *to* with the indirect object in both active and passive.

[13]   *A friend gave <u>me</u> <u>the information</u> / <u>the information to me</u>.*
        ~ <u>The information</u> was given (to) me by a friend. or *<u>I</u> was given the information by a friend.*

The second group are verbs (*feed, build*) of which either object can also become the passive subject but they require a preposition for the indirect object in the passive [14]. This preposition is usually *for* but may be also *to* or *into:*

[14]   *They fed the computer all the available data / all the available data <u>into</u> the computer.*
        ~ All the available data were fed <u>into</u> the computer.

Objects of verbs from the third group either do not allow passive at all (*envy sb. sth.*) as in [15] or only one of the two (direct [16] or indirect [17]) can function as the passive subject:

[15] *Many people wish Peter luck.*

~ NOT *Luck was wished to Peter/ Peter was wished luck by many people.*

[16] *His fearless stand has won (for) him <u>a lot of sympathy</u>.*

~<u>*A lot of sympathy*</u> *has been won for him by his fearless stand.*

[17] *Freeing Peter now would save <u>the authorities</u> a lot of trouble.*

~ <u>*The authorities*</u> *would be saved a lot of trouble by freeing Peter now.*

If the verb allows its direct object to become the passive subject, the indirect object requires the use of preposition *for* in the passive [16] (*get sb. sth.*, *make sb.sth.*).

3.1.4 Prepositional passives

In English, there is a rich variety of multi-word verbs. These verbs consist of two or more parts: the verb itself and other words – particles. Particles can be formed either by prepositions (*on*) or adverbials (*up*). However, not every occurrence of a verb and a particle in a sentence indicates it is a case of multi-word verb. In sentences [17] and [18] the combination of the verb and the particle form a semantic and syntactic unit both of which are followed by a prepositional object. In [19] it is a sequence of a verb and a prepositional phrase. (Quirk, 1984, p.811-12)

[17] *John <u>called up</u> the man*.

[18] *John <u>called on</u> the man*.

[19] *John <u>called</u> from the office*.

Multi-word verbs are divided into **phrasal verbs** as in [17], **prepositional verbs** as in [18] and **phrasal-prepositional** verbs ([20] *John <u>put up with</u> the man*).

An important feature of these verbs is their meaning. The verb and the particle keep their individual lexical meanings (*look over*), the verb has its lexical meaning with the particle with an intensifying function (*find out*) or the combination has its own new idiomatic meaning not deducible from its parts (*bring up*). (Quirk, 1984, p.811-12)

To be able to distinguish between phrasal and prepositional verbs, Quirk (1984, p.816) presents the syntactic criteria for diagnosing the two classes of verbs. The prepositional-verb particle is unstressed, it is placed after the verb and before the object (*They call on the man/him)*, in relative clauses it is put before the relative pronoun (*The*

man on whom they call). Prepositional verbs admit insertion of an adverb (*They call early on the men*). On the other hand, phrasal verbs allow that the verb and the particle which is stressed are separated by a noun or a pronoun (*They call the man/ him up*) but not by an adverb. Phrasal-prepositional verbs are combinations of the previous two.

Having introduced multi-word verbs, let us turn the attention to the passive voice of these verbs. Prepositional verbs are much more common than phrasal verbs. As they are relatively common in academic writing, it shows "that they do not have the same informal overtone as phrasal verbs" (Biber, 1999, p.415). Because of the low frequency of occurrence of phrasal verbs, the focus concerning the passive voice will be predominantly brought onto prepositional verbs or multi-word verbs generally.

Under the process of passivization, the prepositional object of the active sentence is realized as the subject of the passive verb (*paid*). The preposition is left 'stranded': [21] *Has the room been paid for?* (Quirk, 1985, p.663)

Prepositional verbs (*deal with, rely on, depend on, account for*, etc.) can form the passive. An important feature in the process of passivization is **semantic cohesion** as Tseng (2007) mentions. If there is a high degree of cohesion between the verb and the preposition, the prepositional passive is possible. The indicator of semantic cohesion is the possibility of replacing the verb and the preposition by a single-word synonym: [22] *David can be relied on (~ trusted) to get the job done.* The same applies to phrasal verbs and phrasal prepositional verbs: [23] *The man was called up (~summoned).* [24] *Such conduct can't be put up with (~tolerated).* (Tseng, 2007; Dušková, 1994, p. 251-2)

Dušková explains that constructions such as *take good care of something* behaving as one-word verbs are possible to form the passive as well: [25] *The children will be taken good care of.* She makes a note that besides the passive use of the constructions mentioned in the previous sentence, they can form passives that indicate that the noun substantive part is still considered as a sentence element: *Good care will be taken of the children.* (Dušková, 1994, p. 251-2)

In connection to semantic cohesion, according to the grammarians, there are cases when the same sequence of words (e.g. *look at*) has both **idiomatic** [26a, 27a] and **nonidiomatic** [26b, 27b] meaning, their semantic cohesion is of different degrees. Concerning the distinction at the beginning of this chapter, the idiomatic meaning is

associated with the multi-word explanation, while the nonidiomatic one refers to single-word verbs followed by prepositional phrases. Verbs with idiomatic, abstract meaning are said to be more cohesive. Consequently, only the idiomatic interpretation allows the verb to form the passive. Other expressions, such as *go into, arrive at, look into*, accept the passive only in the abstract use. (Quirk, 1985, p.163; Quirk, 1984, p.804; Huddleston, 1993, p.441).

[26a] *The engineers <u>went</u> very carefully <u>into</u> the problem.*

[27a] *The problem <u>was</u> carefully <u>gone into</u> by the engineers.*

[26b] *The engineers <u>went</u> very carefully <u>into</u> the tunnel.*

NOT [27b] *The tunnel <u>was</u> carefully <u>gone into</u> by the engineers.*

We can find examples where the verb phrases are not used abstractly or idiomatically, however, they occur in the passive, especially in a coordinate construction: [28] *This private drawer of mine has been <u>gone into</u> and rummaged so many times that it is totally disarranged.* (Quirk, 1985, p.163)

Till now the discussion in this chapter has focused on single-object prepositional verbs. Many of the **two-object prepositional verbs** occur most of the time with the passive (*associate sb/sth with sb/sth, base sth on sth*). The direct object in the active becomes the subject in the corresponding passive sentence. (Biber and Quirk, 1999, p.482)

[29] *Three main types of bonds <u>are associated with</u> export contracts.*

Jacobs (1995, p.163) presents and explains examples when the passive is possible if it is not the case of multi-word verbs but an **intransitive** verb followed by a **prepositional** phrase having a locative sense (in the active form). The prepositions are not specified by the verbs. The sentences [30] *Seven monarchs have <u>slept</u> in that four-poster bed.* and [31] *A surveyor <u>walked</u> through the forest.*, syntactically and semantically, should not have the passive counterparts because the verbs being intransitive do not seem to have a suitable candidate for a subject. Despite the fact that "[…] the subjects of passive voice clauses are prototypically the entities affected by the action expressed by the verb" (Jacobs, 1995, p.163) the sentences have their passive

counterparts: *That four-poster bed has been slept in by seven monarchs. The forest was walked through by a surveyor*. The bed was somehow affected by the event – we can visualize the slept-in bed with its rumpled sheets. As for these examples, this time it is a case of the degree of affectedness. In the second sentence, the verb *walked through* can be understood as 'measured' as it is a surveyor's job. Semantically, these sentences are like other passives. Since Dušková (1994, p.251) explains these cases the very same as multi-word verbs passives; the semantic cohesion criterion is also applied here. The verb and the preposition can be replaced by a single-word transitive verb: *live in a house = inhabit, sleep in a bed = occupy/ use a bed*. Moreover, Huddleston (1993, p.441) supports Jacobs' instances saying that the passive is acceptable in the cases where the process is the one that affects the subject in some significant way.

It should be pointed out, that even if not all the prepositional verbs occur freely in the passive ([32] *Visitors didn't walk over the lawn. ~ ? The lawn wasn't walked over (by the visitors)*), they do so in case they are present in a particular modal verb construction (*The lawn can't be walked over*). (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, p.350)

3.1.5   Modal verbs

Sentences with modal expressions can also have passive constructions. **Modal passive verb phrases** are generally rather rare, however, some are relatively common in academic writing. Verbs *will*, *would* and *shall* are not frequently used with the passive voice because they often mark volition or prediction with the expressed agent: [33] *We <u>shall</u> hereafter refer to the results of this ordering as the Components of the Activity*. (Biber, 1999, p.499)

In contrast, also explained by Biber (ibid.), the modals *can* and *could* commonly occur in passive constructions. The passive avoids overt identification of the human agent, which results in the action understood as logically possible.

[34]   *Each interpretation <u>can be seen</u> generally to flow through the abbreviated text as a whole.*

[35]   *The methods <u>could be refined</u> and made more accurate.*

Must and *should* are commonly found in the passive voice. These modals are used to mark a kind of collective obligation but in the passive voice they are used "to avoid

identification of the person who is obliged to act" (Biber, 1999, p.500). However, if these verbs are used with **perfect aspect** (common in news), they express logical necessity [38].

[36]   *Care <u>must be taken</u> to ensure that the diffusion in the stator is kept to a reasonable level.*

[37]   *It <u>should be noted</u> that the following scenario is nothing more than one of many potential scenarios.*

[38]   *If the new tape is genuine, then the phone call made by Prince Charles <u>must have been</u> deliberately bugged.*

The modals *might* and *may* occur in the passive "with the perfect expressing a certain degree of doubt about past events or situations" (Biber, 1999, p.500).

[39]   *Yet the markets <u>may have over-reacted</u> even more than usual.*

[40]   *Yesterday he confessed he <u>might have forgotten</u> none.*

It is obvious that some modal verbs are used with different meaning when forming passive constructions and, furthermore, they can have different meaning when negative, which is discussed in Chapter 4.1.

To provide overall view on the constraints concerning verbs, I will briefly summarize what has been discussed in this chapter (3.1). The passive voice is allowed neither with linking and intransitive verbs, nor with middle verbs, which refer to the states than actions. On the other hand, verbs permitting only the passive voice are from a group of verbs taking an object and a *to*-infinitive. Also some constructions such as *be born* occur solely in the passive voice. Ditransitive verbs can be classified according to their objects possible to become passive subject. Both direct and indirect object can function as the subject. The other case is that either direct or indirect object appears as the subject. Prepositional passives are very much connected with the degree of semantic cohesion of the verbs and their particles and idiomaticness of their meaning. When talking about the sequence of an intransitive verb and a prepositional phrase with locative meaning, grammarians suggest the criteria of affectedness of the passive subject. The higher degree of cohesion or affectedness, the more acceptable the passive

voice is. Modal verbs occurring in the passive voice are generally not very frequent, nonetheless, some (*can*, *could*, *must*, *should*) are not scarce.

3.2 Object constraints

Not only verbs can limit the potentiality to make the passive but also the object, which will be dealt with in this chapter. Object follows the verb in basic, canonical structures. Object is formed either by a **phrase** (*John loved Mary*) or by a **clause**: finite (*John thought that she had finished*) and non-finite (*John hoped to finish it soon*).

A noun phrase functioning as an object [41] and [44] is the most common case. Quirk clarifies the cases when passivization is not allowed. If there appears a co-refence between a subject and a phrasal object, the passive is not permitted. This constraint applies to **reflexive** pronouns [42], **reciprocal** pronouns [43] and **possessive** pronouns when it is coreferential to the subject [45]. Since reflexive and reciprocal pronouns are in objective case, naturally, they cannot function as subject in the passive construction. On the other hand, if a reciprocal pronoun is split into two parts, the passive is acceptable ([46] *Each could hardly be seen by the other.*). (Quirk, 1984, p.805-6; Quirk, 1985, p.164)

[41]   *John could see Paul in the mirror. ~ Paul could be seen in the mirror.*

[42]   *John could see himself in the mirror.*

       ~ NOT Himself could be seen in the mirror.

[43]   *We could hardly see each other in the fog.*

       ~ NOT Each other could hardly be seen in the fog.

[44]   *The woman shook my hand. ~ My hand was shaken by the woman.*

[45]   *The woman shook her head. ~ NOT Her head was shaken by the woman.*

Many idioms in which the verb and the object form a close unit are not possible to be passivized: *The ship set sail ~ NOT Sail was set* or *We changed buses ~ NOT Buses were changed.* (Quirk, 1984, p.164)

The other possible form of an object is a clause. Two kinds of **clausal objects** are distinguished – **finite** [47] and **non-finite** (infinitive [48] and gerund [49]). According

to Quirk (1985, p.163-4) and Swan (1996, p.412), these cannot freely become passive subjects. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p.1434) say that "complements with the form of a subordinate clause [...] can be externalised", which means that objects formed by a subordinate clause can become subjects under passivization. Quirk (1984, p.806) narrows the application of this rule saying only finite subordinate clauses can become subjects, and still not in all cases. If the sentence can be passivized, *that* is obligatory in the clause functioning as the passive subject.

[47]   *John thought <u>(that) she was attractive</u>.*

         ~ ? <u>*That she was attractive*</u> *was thought (by John).*

However, the above mentioned linguists agree that if the object is a finite clause introduced by *that*, *whether*, or *if,* extraposition can be used as a means for passivization. The clause is put in the post-verbal position and introduced by anticipatory *it* as a subject: <u>*It was thought*</u> <u>*that she was attractive*</u>.). The passive is also accepted if the subject of the subordinate clause (which functions as object) takes the role of the subject in the main clause (<u>*She was*</u> <u>*thought to be attractive*</u>.)

Non-finite clauses with infinitive [48] or gerund [49] verb phrase that function as active objects cannot freely become passive subject.

[48]   *John hoped <u>to meet her</u>. ~ NOT <u>To meet her</u> was hoped (by John).*

[49]   *John enjoyed <u>seeing her</u>. ~ NOT <u>Seeing her</u> was enjoyed (by John).*

Extraposition can be used in sentences with finite clauses, however, it cannot be applied to sentences with non-finite clauses using gerunds, and it is only sometimes acceptable with non-finite infinitive clauses, restricted to just a few catenative verbs (e.g. *decide, desire, hope, prefer*) (Quirk, 1985, p.164; Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1435): [50] <u>*It was desired*</u> <u>*to have the report delivered here*</u>.

Although passives with gerunds as subjects are uncommon, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p.1435) explain the case when the gerund allows passivization. The authors present two examples of the actives, one (*Sam remembered painting the house*) in which the subject of *paint* is recovered from the main clause, the other (*Sam recommended taking out a mortgage*) in which the subject of the verb *take* "is not specified syntactically but has to be contextually recovered". The second example is the

type of construction that can be passivized: [51] *Taking out a mortgage wasn't considered/ recommended/ suggested*.

A sentence may contain **both phrasal and clausal objects**. Dušková (1994, p.252) clarifies the principle of passivization when there are both types of an object in the sentence. If a direct object is formed with a finite clause or with a non-finite infinitive clause, it is possible only for the indirect object to function as the subject in the passive construction ([52] *We were told to come at three.* [53] *She was promised that the offer would remain open.*)

Verbs *see, hear, make* and *help* can be followed by phrasal object and an **infinitive without to**: *I saw him come out of the house*. In passive structures the infinitive is used with *to*: [54] *He was seen to come out of the house.* (Swan, 1996, p.413)

3.3 Agent constraints

In Chapter 2, it was explained that English distinguishes two types of passive – short passive and long passive. Long passives are the ones containing the agent by-phrase, short passives are without an expressed agent. The subject in active sentences functions as an agent in the passive counterparts. Unlike the active subject, the agent is **optional**. In English the occurrence of an agent is rather rare. "In fact approximately four out of five English passive sentences have no expressed agent" (Quirk, 1985, p.164). It is omitted especially when it is irrelevant, unknown or would be redundant if expressed. (Quirk, 1985, p.164-5)

The agent has the agentive role which corresponds to the agentive role of the active subject. The agentive is the cause of the event. It is typically animate, usually personal ([55] *We were observed by a passing stranger)*, it may also be inanimate ([56] *The crops have been ruined by frost.*). It has been stated that a *by*-phrase functions as an agent, though it does not always take on the role of an agent as in [57] *The window had been broken by a stone*, where it expresses the meaning of **instrument**, hence the passive is agentless – the short passive. *By* in [56] excludes a human cause: there is the natural cause – frost, while in [57] it is suggested that a human agent had used a stone to break the window. The difference between the two instances appears also in the active counterparts. The *by*-phrase in [56] can operate as the subject in the active, while in [57]

the counterpart of the phrase in the corresponding active clause is more likely to be an adverbial phrase with instrumental force, which means its function would remain the same as in the passive (Quirk, 1985, p.700-1; Dušková, 1999, p.122-3)

According to Quirk (1985, p.7001-2) the agentive role is not connected only with the *by*-phrase but also *at* can be used to express the relation between the agent and the predicate, precisely, between an emotive reaction and an abstract stimulus: [58] *I was alarmed at/ by his behaviour.* Both possibilities have their active counterpart *His behaviour alarmed me*. Such occurrence of a preposition in an agentive phrase is called **semi-agent**.

Since the agent is not obligatory, thus unexpressed in many passive constructions, it may not be recoverable. Due to the impossibility to identify the agent, the change of voice from the passive to the active is not feasible in all instances. (Quirk, 1984, p.164-5)

[59]   *Order had been restored without bloodshed.*

~ ? *Colonel Laval had restored order without bloodshed.*

~ ? *The administration had restored order without bloodshed.*

~ ? *The army had restored order without bloodshed.*

Quirk (1984, p.165) and Dušková (1994, p.253) remark that in some sentences, the agent is not optional but obligatory: [60] *The music was followed by a short interval.* Without an agent the sentence becomes informationally vacuous: *The music was followed.* Another example [61] *He was brought up by his aunt* shows necessity to express the agent. Possibly, the agent can be absent if there is another adverbial used: [62] *He was brought up with great care.*

4. Meaning

4.1 Semantic difference between active and passive

Although it is possible in most cases to make corresponding sentences in both active and passive, their propositional meaning does not have to be the same. As explained in 1.2, while transforming sentences from active to passive or vice versa, the

structure of sentence elements is changed. This change of order brings the change of **emphasis**, of the **scope of negation and quantifiers** or the **meaning of modal auxiliaries**. (Quirk, 1985, p. 165)

Quirk (1985, p.165) demonstrates the role of quantifiers on the following examples. An active sentence [63] *Every schoolboy knows one joke at least* may have a different interpretation from the most likely interpretation of passive [64] *One joke at least is known by every schoolboy.* Example [63], considering that *one* is in the scope of *every*, says "Each schoolboy knows as least some joke or other", while [64] "There is one particular joke which is known to every schoolboy", because the scope in [64] is inverse – *every* is in the scope of *one.*

Jacobs (1995, p.168-9) provides another example: [65] *Five students in that room spoke three languages.* The sentence is most probably understood that fifteen different languages were known by the five students, while the passive [66] *Three languages were spoken by five students in that room* is interpreted as being about three specific languages. Again, *three* is in the scope of *five* in [65], and *five* is in the scope of *three* in [66]. As Sgall asserts (1984, p.262), it is, however, due to the different word order (which shifts the scope of the quantifiers) of the two corresponding sentences rather than due to the change of voice itself that there is a contrast in meaning.

According to Quirk, if a modal auxiliary which enables more interpretations (e.g. *will, shall, can*) is part of a verb phrase, the shift of voice may have an impact on the meaning of the modal. [67] *You must reprimand every one of them* is an active sentence expressing that 'it's your duty to do it'. The passive sentence [68] *Every one of them must be reprimanded* would be understood as 'Everyone of them is to blame'. The semantic difference is more noticeable in negative forms of modal verbs. The modal in *Jane cannot do it* expresses ability but its passive counterpart *It cannot be done* (*by Jane*) may say 'It is not possible to do it' expressing possibility. (Quirk, 1985, p.165-6) The usage of the passive with modal verbs and the difference of meaning in active and passive were described with particular modal verbs in Chapter 3.1.5.

Different interpretations of an active and passive sentence can be also seen in sentences where both subject and object of the active sentence are **generic**: *Beavers build dams.* "In subject position, a generic phrase tends to be interpreted universally, while in object or agent position, this universal meaning disappears" (Quirk, 1985,

p.166). *Beavers* in the active is regarded as 'all beavers'. If the sentence is passivized [69] *Dams are built by beavers*, the subject has the generic universal meaning 'all dams'. Taking this into account, each sentence has different meaning. (Quirk, 1995, p.166)

4.2 Dynamic and stative passive

Firstly, let us have a look at the general distinction of verbs between state and nonstate. Verbs like *know* or combinations of verb and adjective like *be tall* are used to refer to states. They cannot form imperatives and do not normally occur in the progressive form: NOT *Know Chinese!*, *Be tall!*, *Tanya is knowing Chinese.* (Jacobs, 1995, p.164)

Verbs used dynamically, which means they refer to actions or processes, can be used in imperatives and allow progressive aspect: *Learn Chinese!*, *Tanya is learning Chinese.* This applies also to the combinations such as *be a good girl*: *Be a good girl, Tanya!*, *Tanya is being a good girl.* However, some verbs can be used in both dynamic and stative sense: *The women will run from Ann Arbor to Detroit. Route 94 runs from Ann Arbor to Detroit. Run* refers to an activity in the first sentence, but the second sentence describes location – state. (Jacobs, 1995, p.164)

To focus on the passive voice again, according to Dušková (1994, p.262), in English the passive with the auxiliary *be* does not distinguish between expressing **action** and **state**. This distinction is apparent from the context in many cases. In [70] *All our effort is wasted* the passive is stative, while in [71] *Much effort is wasted on things like that,* it is dynamic expressing a process or an action. Jacobs (1995, p.164-5) presents another example [72] *The area of settlement was separated from the rest of the region by a mountain range* that refers to a state. Stative passives (also their active counterparts, as mentioned above) cannot be used as imperatives and cannot form progressive, which means it is not possible to say *The area of settlement was being separated from the rest of the region by a mountain range*. However, the fact that the verb is stative in this sentence, does not mean that it cannot be used dynamically: [73] *The outer layer was separated from the nucleus by physicists using laser beams.*

Biber and Quirk (1999, p.475) state that "passive constructions form a fuzzy category" because they may involve constructions where the participle form of the verb with stative meaning is very close to adjectival use. Dušková (1994, p.262) also observes that in some cases the participle is considered as an adjective – participial adjectives. Then the verb *be* is copular not an auxiliary: [74] *Are you drunk or something?*. These constructions are labelled as **adjectival passives** or pseudo-passives, which will be discussed in the following part of this chapter.

4.2.1 Adjectival passives

As it was mentioned, the past participle of the full verb with stative meaning in some constructions has adjectival use. These constructions are called adjectival passives and they always have a stative interpretation. Adjectival passive sentences look superficially like passive sentences. Although many of them contain the verb *be*, it is not used as an auxiliary verb but as a copular verb.

It was pointed out that the border between verbal and adjectival use of participles is not sharp in many cases. The unclear distinction between those brings ambiguity, as seen in an example [77] provided by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p.1436).

[75]   *The kitchen window was <u>broken</u> by the thieves.*

[76]   *They were very <u>worried</u>.*

[77]   *They were <u>married</u>.*

Broken in [75] is a verb, *worried* in [76] is an adjective, however *married* in [77] can be either. The ambiguity arises thanks to two possible interpretations. The actional dynamic interpretation says that the marriage ceremony took place, while in the adjectival interpretation it is static, describing that they were husband and wife.

Huddleston (1993, p.323; 2002, p.1436-7) as well as Quirk (1985, p.170) provides criteria which can be applied to determine adjectival status:

- adjectives can be used both attributively ([78] *He is a <u>worried</u> man*) and predicatively ([79] *They were <u>worried</u>*)

- they are gradable – they can be modified by *very* and *too*, verbs cannot: [80] *They were <u>very worried</u>.* [81] *He was <u>too embarrassed</u> by their behaviour.*

The latter example shows that adjectival passives allow a *by* phrase, with some constraints though

- They can occur with other copular verbs *become*, *seem*, *look*, *appear*: *They seemed very worried*, NOT *The kitchen window seemed broken by the thieves.* This condition is necessary for adjectival status. "If *be* cannot be replaced by other such verbs, the passive in question is normally verbal" (Huddleston and Pullum, p.1437)

- Many adjectives form opposites by taking the prefix *un-*: *The letter was still unanswered.* A few verbs can take *un-* as prefix, but with a different sense (*untie, unwind*). Consequently, such verbs cause ambiguity.

Example [81] demonstrates, as it was noted, that a *by*-phrase can be found in adjectival passives, however, its occurrence is much more restricted than in verbal passives. "*By*-phrases are permitted in adjectival passives when the meaning of the corresponding verb is stative but not when it is dynamic" (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1439). The verb *break* in [82] *The window was broken by vandals* has a dynamic meaning and being unambiguously verbal (NOT *The window remained broken by vandals*) it cannot be adjectival. On the other hand, adjectival [83] *Kim was worried by the prospect of redundancy* is admissible because the verb *worry* has a stative meaning. To proof the adjectival status, we can replace the passive auxiliary *be* with the copular verb and *worried* can be modified by *very*: *Kim seemed very worried by the prospect of redundancy.* There are also cases where some other preposition is used: [84] *She was pleased at these results.* (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.1438-9)

In conception of Dušková (1999, p.115), forms regarded as adjectives such as in [85] *You seem much annoyed* are considered passives because of the potentiality of the passive subject to occur as the active object. The construction in the example allows *it annoys you.* On the other hand, if the past participle contains the negative prefix *un-* (*This is not unexpected*), it is excluded from the passive forms. There are not verbs like *unexpect* or *unjustify*. Similarly, *be ashamed*, *be afraid* or *be used* (in the sense 'accustom someone to something') are not based on verbs because these verbs do not exist.

In my conception, all the constructions containing the auxiliary *be* or a copular verb followed by a past participle are taken into consideration. Nevertheless, if the

construction is negative thanks to the *un-* prefix, as described by Dušková above, it is not regarded as passive.

Let us return back to dynamic/ stative distinction. Dušková (1994, p.262) claims that if we want to express a dynamic sense and the action is in progress, the dynamic passive is in the present or past tense expressed with progressive form ([86] *The matter is being attended.* [87] *She felt that she was being blamed unfairly).* The dynamic sense, in informal texts, can be indicated by the *get*-passive.

4.2.2 Get-passive

The difference between *be*-passive and *get*-passive together with their general features has already been partly described. What the form concerns, *get*-passives have the verb *get* in the role of an auxiliary. It is necessary to use the auxiliary *do* in questions [88a] and negatives [88b]. They are most commonly used without the agent as it is also optional. This type of passive is generally rare, it occurs mainly in informal English, but it is less frequent than the be-passive, furthermore, it is avoided in formal style.

> [88]   *She <u>got</u> arrested by the Feds last night.*
> a.   *Did she get arrested by the Freds last night?*
> b.   *She didn't get arrested by the Freds last night.*

Dušková (as noted in 4.2) together with Biber and Quirk (1999, p.481) point out that the *get*-passive has a more dynamic meaning. It describes the process of getting into the state, while the be-passive describes the state. Thus, according to Quirk (1985, p.162), it is a convenient way to avoid ambiguity between stative and dynamic meaning in *The chair was broken* by using [89] *The chair got broken*. Moreover, thanks to its dynamic feature, it is possible to make imperatives: *Go and get changed* (NOT *Go and be changed*). (McEnery, 2006)

Since this chapter deals with the meaning, it is important to mention that passives in some languages communicate unfavourable attitude toward the event being described. The 'undergoer' (the subject) is considered to have been affected in a negative manner

by the event. The *get*-passive in English has a similar connotation. Some of the verbs which are commonly used with these passives themselves express that the action of the verb is difficult or to the disadvantage of the subject. (Biber and Quirk. 1999, p.481; Jacobs, 1995, p.167)

[90]   *It's about these people who got left in Vietnam.*

Furthermore, Huddleston (1993, p.445) asserts that the *get*-passive also assigns to the subject some measure of responsibility or initiative. If the speaker believes that the subject seeks or is careless in allowing the event to happen, they are more likely to use *get* (*Ed got arrested.*) Such an element of initiative or responsibility is also associated with the subject in the reflexive construction [91] *Ed got himself arrested*, where we could not substitute *be* for *get*.

5. Function of the passive

There are more factors which influence the use of the passive voice. The lexico-grammatical factors as well as the relation between active and passive have already been discussed in the previous chapters. This chapter will deal with the occurrence of the passive together with the stylistic and functional factors.

5.1 Functional aspect of the passive

It has been explained from the grammatical and lexical viewpoint under which conditions it is possible to construct the passive, when it is not possible and when the passive is the only option. This chapter will focus on the factors favouring the choice of the passive voice, especially in situations when both active and passive versions are grammatically permitted.

5.1.1 Agency

As it is pointed out in Chapter 5.1, passive clauses without an expressed agent are much more numerous than the ones with the agent. The fact that the active subject can

be omitted in passive sentences suggests one of the reasons why the passive is given preference. Siewierska (1979, p.35) explains (in Fernández, 2006, p.4)

> The principal occasion of the use of the passive voice is the desire of the speaker to avoid mentioning the primary participants of the action, because not clearly known, or thought of no importance, or because involving the possibility of compromising him.

The agent is unexpressed because it is unknown, because it is unimportant or irrelevant, it is obvious from the context and its mentioning would be redundant. Consequently, the passive is the device for not-expressing the cause of the action.

A large group of agentless passives implies a human agent. Human agent can be indefinite (**general human agent**) [92] or definite [93]. The definite implied agent is usually the **author** (writer or an investigator) but can also be other than the author. (Dušková, 1999, p.118-20)

[92] *It had previously been assumed that the layers were in thermodynamic equilibrium, and the details of the ionization and recombination processes were ignored in calculating the radiation omitted from these layers.*

[93] *As has generally been stated, the present study was originally undertaken in the hope of finding a satisfactory explanation for the difference between the uses of the expanded and non-expanded verb-clusters in English.*

The passive with an implied general human agent is used especially in scientific style. It serves to avoid using (in generic sense) *one* or *we*, and informal *you* or *they* because they are not widely applicable.

The definite agent implying the author is also characteristic in scientific style as the attention is paid to the information presented, not to the author. It avoids explicit reference to the writer, which makes the text more objective. (Dušková, 1994, p.260) Huddleston (1993, p.447) remarks that this agentless passive is "common in many other contexts, such as letters from government departments and the like, where the identity of the public servant who actually drafts the letter will typically not be revealed".

Dušková (1994, p.260) points out that there are implied agents that indicate either an identifiable or unidentifiable entity, and its expressing is not relevant or the speaker avoids it intentionally. The implied agent can be **unknown**, which is often in natural sciences ([94] *Genes are arranged in fixed positions*).

The passives that make the second largest group are **without any agency** involved. Since, in these passives, the agent is an element in the sentence that is not present at all, these constructions in some respect resemble intransitive use. It can be shown by the fact that with some verbs the active (intransitive) and passive sentences alternate without any significant difference in meaning, hence the two forms behave as free variants. (Dušková, 1994, p.260; Dušková, 1999, p.120-1)

[95] a. *16 patients with atrial fibrillation converted to sinus rhythm and five did not.*

b. *16 of 21 patients with atrial fibrillation were converted to sinus rhythm.*

Since one of the main functions of the passive is to evade mentioning the agent, it is evident that passives with expressed agent occur rarely.

[96] *Wastewater entering anaerobic ponds is initially metabolized by a group of facultatively anaerobic heterotrophs.*

The long passive requires that the subject represents the information that is old in the given context, at least it needs to be more familiar than the agent. On the other hand, the subject of the short passive may be old or new. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p. 1444; Fernández, 2006, p.6)

[97] *The major consequence of any reduction in water flow through the sediment is a lowering of oxygen concentration, because <u>oxygen</u> is used up by <u>organisms</u> faster than it can be replaced.*

The subject of the passive clause in [97] is *oxygen*. Since it has already been mentioned in the preceding clause, it is discourse-old (thematic). On the contrary, the agent is discourse-new (rhematic). It is observable that the pattern of familiarity of the elements is: old + new. The other patterns allowed are old + old [98] and new + new [99]. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p. 1444). Although the agent as discourse-old information is known or it is discourse-new as well as the subject, it is used because it is emphasized or required by the verb for the meaning of the message.

[98] *Paul and Mary have agreed to help with the salads. We'll serve a pasta salad and a traditional bowl of tossed greens. <u>The pasta salad</u> will be made <u>by Paul</u>, and Mary will bring the greens.*

[99] *Before the parade, <u>a flag ceremony</u> will be led <u>by a troop of Girl Scouts</u>.*

Taking into account the fact that the placement of discourse-old and discourse-new elements governs the possibility to form the passive, the distribution of old and new information within a clause can influence the choice of the voice. This leads to another function of the passive, which will be dealt with in the following paragraphs.

5.1.2   Functional sentence perspective

Since the passive enables the patient to appear in the pre-verbal position and the agent in the post-verbal position, this fact makes the passive a means of functional sentence perspective, which deals with structuring information within a sentence.

The important feature of English language is that the direction of informativity is towards the end of each grammatical unit – a clause or a sentence. This feature is called **communicative dynamism**. Firbas (1971, p.136) describes (in Bruce, 1988) communicative dynamism as "that quality, or aggregate of qualities, in a text which impels a reader through that text, and which pushes the communication forward' ". The theme which is the old information is placed in the initial position while the rheme (the part of a sentence which carries the new information) in the final position. This tendency to place new information towards the end of a clause is according to Quirk (1985, p.943) called the principle of end-focus.

Mathesius (1975, p.157) states (in Dušková, 2005) that the English usual word order in a sentence is subject – finite verb – object. It cannot be changed at will, which means that it cannot always comply with the principle of functional sentence perspective. Thus the passive resolves this conflict.

> [100]   *John prospered very well. At school he eagerly listened to every word of his teachers. <u>At home he was helped by his father</u> whenever he found his task too difficult. He was successful in any kind of work.*

In the excerpt, the subject of the sentences is *John*. Its presence in the sentences is not new, hence it is thematic and should be placed in the initial position in a sentence. If all the sentences were in the active, the passive sentence would be: *At home his father helped him...*, which would not agree with functional sentence perspective (theme – initial position; rheme – final position).

When dealing again with agentless passives, let us look at the following example.

[101] *The function of this widespread blue coloration is not known.*

The verb is the rheme, it means it requires final position in the sentence. If the sentence is in the active (*We do not know the function of this widespread coloration*), the verb is in medial position. The rhematic position is occupied by the object. Due to the fact that the object carries less new information than the verb it should be placed before the verb, which is achieved by the passive. (Dušková, 1999, p.125)

At the same time, the subject of the passive sentence is clearly the theme. Thanks to the anaphoric device (*the*) it is obviously known from the preceding context and it does not present any new information. By means of the passive it can be placed in the initial thematic position. This also applies to the following example. (Dušková, 1999, p.125)

[102] *This time is called the critical dark period or the critical night.*

The verb in this example, as Dušková says (1999, p.126), "carries more new information than the thematic subject and less than the final rhematic part of the sentence and is consequently transitional, which is in accordance with its medial position". In the active sentence, the verb would appear in the position before the thematic element which would "disturb the gradual increase in communicative dynamism". There would also be difficulties with the expression of an indefinite general human agent (as well as in [101]).

Now focusing on agentive passives, the passive is mostly employed to serve for the purpose of functional sentence perspective (the main function which is to avoid expressing the agent is not applicable).

[103] a. *The process has been photographed and described by D.P.Wilson.*

          b. *D.P. Wilson has photographed and described the process.*

In the passive sentence [103a], the thematic part is placed according to FSP in the initial position while the agent is the rhematic part carrying new information. Again, the anaphoric definite article indicates its familiarity from the context. The active counterpart [103b] contains discourse-old information placed in the final position, which does not follow communicative dynamism. (Dušková, 1999, p.134-5)

Examples of agentless passives [101], [102] and agentive passives [103] show how anaphoric devices are used to indicate the thematic nature of the subject. Anaphoric devices usually used are in the following list provided by Dušková (1999, p.136):

- definite articles: example [101], [103]

- demonstrative pronouns: example [102]

- relative pronouns: [104] *A man claiming disablement benefit for this disease undergoes a chest X-ray <u>which</u> is examined by a medical member of a pneumoconiosis medical panel.*

- personal pronouns: [105] *Thus Newton's theory of gravitation still serves on all but the largest and the smallest scale of cosmic events, but <u>it</u> has been refuted and at the extremes replaced by Einstein's theory.*

- possessive pronouns: [106] *There are vertical winds that tend to keep the composition constant, but, above 105-110 km, <u>their</u> effect is outweighed by that due to settling.*

- expressions like *similar, such*: [107] <u>*Such*</u> *situations are characterized by varying degrees of bilingualism.*

- other anaphoric devices (*one … the other*): [108] *There are two phases to the flowering process, <u>one</u> of which is inhibited by red light and <u>the other</u> of which is promoted by red light.*

Not only end-focus (theme-rheme) principle is the factor that favours forming passive sentences instead of the active but also "weight" of the clauses. The end-weight principle is what we call a tendency that reserves the final position for the more complex parts of the clause or sentence. (Quirk, 1985, p.943)

[109] *Tony Blair's campaign was endorsed this week by a majority of Labour's National Executive, which approved a draft.*

However, Dušková (1999, p.135) insists, that no matter how heavy the agent is, its position is due to its rhematic nature.

5.1.3   Other functions

Another reason for the passive is presented by Dušková (1999, p.127) explaining that the passive avoids the **intrusive effect** due to the introduction of a subject in the active sentence. It is the case of relative clauses.

[110] *This article describes some of the animals that are found there, ….*

If the relative clause was in the active *This article describes some of the animals that we find there*, a subject *we* is added. In the passive version, there is a subject (*this article*) and an object (*some of the animals*) in the main clause whereas *that* is the subject of the relative clause referring to the object of the main clause. However, *we* in the active sentence is a third participant that does not provide any new relevant information, hence it is redundant

The passive is also used for **maintaining the same** subject throughout the sentences or clauses, where the theme is constant. This tendency of English, as Dušková (2005) says, was also pointed out by Mathesius in connection with example [100]:

[111] *The floats continue to drift about the surface after the death of the animal and are frequently seen with a variety of sessile animal growths on them.*

Firbas (1992, p.59-63) deals with the semantic factor of the cases where there is a subject not mentioned before in the text, it conveys new information, and verbs perform a presentative function. The subject carries the highest degree of communicative dynamism. The verb on the other hand recedes into the background. These structures express **appearance or existence** on the scene. The verbs that convey the meaning of production in these structures can appear in the passive. If adverbials are present, they serve as settings, local or temporal, only.

[112] a. *Quite a number of new houses have been built in our towns.*

b. *Powerful machines have been constructed.*

c. *A new method has been developed.*

d. *Monuments will be erected in the centre of the city.*

The sentences with verbs in the passive demonstrate that the meaning of appearance or existence on the scene is also conveyed by transitive verbs. Firbas calls those types of sentences presentation scale in which the sentence contains three semantic functions: scene (setting), presentation on the scene (existence, appearance on the scene) and the

phenomenon presented on the scene. Obviously, the sentence initial position is occupied by the rheme, which shows that the passive is used also for presenting new entities placed before the noun.

Firbas does not try to belittle the function of the passive that, in agreement with the word order, it enables the rhematic part to appear in the final position in the sentence. It shows that the passive can help to perspective the sentence towards the subject.

5.2 Occurrence of the passive voice

One of the factors operating in favour of the passive is a functional style or a register. Although the usage of the passive is closely connected with its function, let me now focus only on the distribution of the passive drawing from two studies.

Dušková (1999, p.113-148) defined two areas on which her study is based respecting British and American English. Half of the material represents scientific English, the other half was excerpted from **dialogues** in plays and novels. The author considered all the finite forms of *be* followed by a past participle. The study shows that the passive is much more frequent in **scientific writing** covering 20.68% in both forms of English. On the other hand, conversational dialogues contain only 3.24% of the passives from all the finite verb forms. The author (Dušková, 2005) summarizes her findings claiming that English passives with an expressed *by*-agent account for some 10% of all the passive forms. Agents with other preposition than *by* occur in 3.5%.

Biber (1999, p.476) using the term register has come to very similar results. He presents four courses of study (academic prose, news, fiction and conversation) in which he describes the distribution of the passive and active voice. The constructions he has taken into account were finite verb forms while the counts are based on a broad definition of passive excluding clearly adjectival passives. Passive is the most common in **academic prose**, proportionally, it accounts for about 25% of all the finite verbs. In news, passives comprise 15% of all the finite verbs. The extreme can be seen in **conversations** where the passive occurs in about 2% of the finite verbs. Since the passive is highly frequent in written expository prose, especially academic journal articles, we can find whole passages written in the passive voice, as Biber exemplifies:

[113] *Three communities on a brackish marsh of the Rhode River, a sub-estuary of the Chesapeake Bay, <u>were exposed</u> to elevated carbon dioxide concentrations for two growing seasons beginning in April 1987. The study site and experimental design <u>are described</u> in Curtis et al. (1980a). One community <u>was dominated</u> by the perennial carbon grass spartina patens...*

The findings show that the active voice prevails in all registers not less than in 75% of all the finite verb forms. The passive voice is found mainly in writings with intellectual-communicative function (20-25%) with predominating agentless passives. Conversation on the other hand employs the passive in approximately 3%.

While scientific or academic writing tries to avoid personal approach and focuses on the results that it conveys, which is reached thanks to the passive by avoiding the agent, conversation on the other hand does not attempt this to such an extent because in many instances the agent of the action is important to mention. Since, evidently, the style is a factor determining the usage of the passive, the following part will focus on stylistic factor.

5.2.1 Stylistic factor

As it was mentioned, the passive voice is frequently used in scientific writings but very rarely in conversations. This indicates the importance of functional style in application of the passive.

Scientific writing is focused on the findings described, "even if the writer describes a procedure devised and performed by himself, he prefers impersonal presentation" (Dušková, 1999, p.129) and avoids the usage of *we* in the active. Personal pronouns as subjects generally are not preferred. As it was mentioned, also expressing the author is avoided in this style.

Moreover, these texts, as Dušková (1999, p.129) asserts, describe natural processes that are sometimes caused by indefinite and unknown entity, which means that the human agent is involved as an observer. Therefore, scientific writing tends to present information in the scheme topic – event relating to it.

[114] *Similar changes were not observed in those whose atrial fibrillation*
    persisted.

In some examples presenting information in topic-event pattern, it is observable that the subject carries the largest amount of new information, however it is in thematic

position. In these cases, the main factor is to avoid the agent-action construction. The new information is introduced as early as possible. (Dušková, 1999, p.137)

> [115] *In the six years 1956-61, a total of 81,079 applications for disablement benefit were made by coalminers.*

Dušková (1999, p.132) points out that, on the contrary, in mathematical writing, it is common to employ the active voice ([116] *Nevertheless, we shall imagine this reduction as having been carried out…*). Apart from the rhematic element placed at the end of a clause, the factor which influences the choice is "the need for an inclusive plural, since the reader has to adopt the writer's approach in order to follow the author's reasoning" (ibid.).

The other extreme of usage of the passive voice is **conversation** where it is found infrequently. Conversation has a human-centered concern with people's actions, thought, and stances, and the passive is used to demote the subject, who is often the speaker. The *get*-passive is on the other hand exclusively found in conversations. Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p.478).

Also in this style, according to Dušková (1999, p.141), the main factors are functional sentence perspective [117] and non-existence of an agent [118].

> [117] *And now it's covered with leaves.*

> [118] *My life was never meant to be like this – limited in this way.*

What favours using the active in the style of conversation is the preference of the agent – action pattern in descriptions involving a human agent. Another reason is that in conversations, the devices for expressing the indefinite general human agent are available (*you*, *one*). (Dušková, 1999, p.139)

6. Summary

The theoretical part focuses on the description of the passive voice as it is presented by different grammarians. The passive voice is defined as a type of voice in which the subject has a role of a recipient, it is an entity affected by the action of the active subject

whose role is agentive. Under the process of passivization, the sentence elements change their positions: the active subject becomes the passive agent introduced by a preposition *by*, it follows the verb if it is expressed in the passive, the active object becomes the passive subject and the verb is formed by the auxiliary *be* and past participle of a full verb.

The conditions playing a major role in passivization are verbs (transitivity, semantic cohesion in case of multi-word verbs and other semantic and grammatical factors) and active subjects, which is an issue studied in the analytical part of this thesis.

What the meaning of the passive voice concerns, it can differ from the active due to the change of scope of negation and quantifiers, due to the change of meaning of modal verbs when part of the verbs phrase and also due to the change of emphasis.

The passive voice generally does not distinguish between describing a state or a process, however, the distinction can be recognized from the context, from the auxiliary and linking verb and form the dynamic or stative nature of the past participle. *Get* as a copular verb can be in a less formal language used instead of *be* to express the process, on the other hand, constructions with participles used as adjectives clearly describe state but not process.

Thanks to the fact that the passive does not have to contain the doer of the action, it is favoured in scientific style. Hence the passive occurs in these texts in a large number, though not by far prevailing over the active voice. The results of research dealing with the occurrence are presented as part of the analytical part.

Although the unexpressed agent may imply various animate and inanimate entities, the main function of the passive is preserved: omission of the agent. This makes the passive a frequent device in scientific style to maintain impersonal and objective tone of the texts.

Passive constructions with their agent expressed are used to satisfy functional sentence perspective requirements. Both the main functions are an essential part of the concern in the second part of this thesis taking into consideration the functional style.

III. Practical part

7. Introduction to the analysis

The second part of the thesis is practical and it will focus on the analysis of passive constructions in a chosen text. It deals with the proportion of passive and active verb phrases that occur in the analysed texts. The aim of the analytical part is to classify and analyse the passive constructions according to various criteria (agency, modality, etc.). Next chapter explain reasons for using the passive in particular examples.

The texts used for the analysis are taken from two sources. The first source is a chapter (marked as Text 1) called *On the Explanatory Power of the Functional Load of Phonemes* (p.36-43) from book *Selected Writing in English and General Linguistics* that was written by Josef Vachek. The second source (marked as Text 2) is a chapter called *The Parameters of Pragmatics* written by Anne Neville downloaded from the Internet. The excerpts, included in the Appendices, are both scientific texts originally written in English. The first text was written by a Czech scholar in 1976, the second one is a thesis written by a British/ Australian graduate at University of Queensland, Australia, in 1992. The texts are of different length, therefore the outcomes from the analysis, if presented separately, are not compared, but they are presented to provide the overall result. The thesis presents examples from the excerpts; examples of passive sentences are numbered in the texts.

What the outcomes of the analysis concerns, taking into account the style in which the texts are written, I assume that the frequency of the occurrence of the passive will correspond with the outcomes of Dušková and Biber presented in Chapter 5.1, i.e. a quarter (25%) of all the finite verb forms occurring in the samples are in the passive voice. Agentless passives are expected to occur in 90% of all the passive sentences,

which leads to the next point of the hypothesis: the passive constructions in the samples are used for the purpose of omitting the agent expressed in the active clause and to satisfy the requirements of functional sentence perspective.

8. Scientific style

Before the analysis of the texts, it is important to describe what types of texts they are, considering their style in which they are written. The term scientific style includes mainly writings in natural sciences or technical texts, however, this work understands it in a broad sense – as a style used for genres including all sciences, i.e. humanities in this case.

"The best scientific writing is characterized by brevity, clarity, and precision" (Aaronson, 1977). Its purpose is to inform and communicate information in the most effective way. Scientific writing tends to be impersonal and objective as much as possible.

Jankiewicz (2008) presents stylistic characteristics of scientific writing written by Jones (1965). Scientific writing presents facts, it is truthful and accurate. It is systematic and logically developed. It does not express emotions. It reaches its general conclusions on the basis of facts. It does not try to persuade and it does not exaggerate.

Scientist use specific language and vocabulary. They employ vocabulary that "precisely defines the phenomena they are investigating. This vocabulary does not normally occur outside of a scientific context, and alternative ways of expressing the same ideas do not normally occur within a scientific context" (Crystal, 1975).

The syntax is also more complex that can be found elsewhere. Rejtharová and Skálová (1981) explain, as for the word order, scientific style contains sentences in neutral arrangement (subject – verb – object). From the viewpoint of communicative function, the elements are ordered from the theme to the element with the highest degree of communicative dynamism – rheme. Cleft sentence or linking verbs like *seem, appear* are used. Other devices often employed in scientific texts are existential phrases *there is/ are*, inversion of subject and predicate or focus adverbs such as *only*.

Logical sequence of ideas is much more overt in scientific writing. Conjuncts and disjuncts help the writer to arrange the text. Phrases referring back to the text or forward, phrases introducing the cause or result occur frequently: *as I said earlier*, *the above describes the procedure used*, *as will be seen below*, *for this reason*, *therefore*, etc. Adverbials and adverbial clauses are placed usually at the beginning of a sentence. Non-finite phrases (participles, gerunds, infinitives) are another typical feature of scientific style, which enables the text to be more impersonal and condensed. (Rejtharová and Skálová, 1981)

The most characteristic attribute of scientific writing is the passive voice. It has been mentioned in theoretical part why the passive is preferred. Also Rejtharová and Skálová describe the reasons: It used if the agent is not important, is unknown, if it is general, or the author wants to avoid their mentioning because of their modesty or redundancy, or if it does not exist. In scientific style, the arrangement of the elements gives preference to the order topic – event over agent –action and at the same time thanks to the passive the sentence is possible to agree with the requirements of functional sentence perspective. (ibid.)

9. Voice distribution

It has been mentioned that the number of active verb phrases in English is considerably higher than the number of passive constructions. The active voice is unmarked and its ordering of single elements in the sentence is agent – action. The passive follows the pattern patient – action performed by the agent that can but does not have to be expressed. This distinction makes the two types of voice different from the viewpoint of their usage. The active can be considered as universal while the passive is used for certain purposes.

Due to the analysis, the above stated proves to be true also in the texts used for the research presented here. In the analysis, the constructions which were taken into consideration were finite forms. In the case of the passive voice, the forms included were constructions of a form of the verb *be* followed by the past participle (copular verbs such as *get* or *become* do not occur in the excerpts) and modal verbs and

periphrastic modals followed by *be* with the past participle. The results of quantitative representation of the passive are as follows:
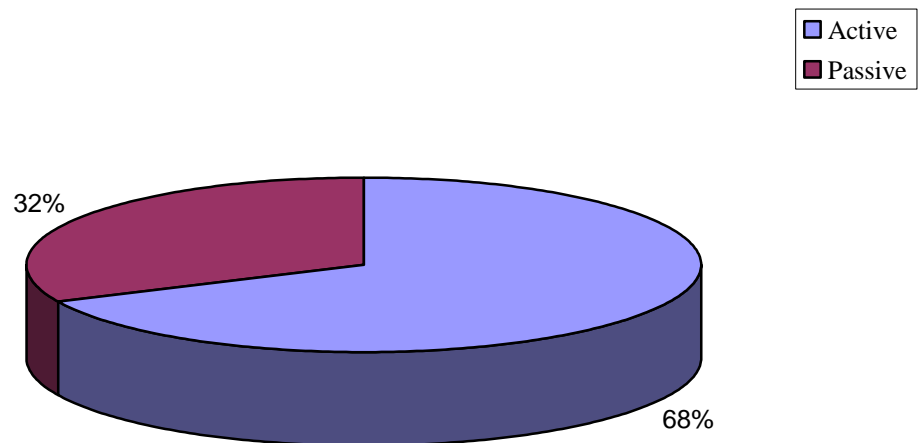

Figure 1

	Text 1		Text 2		both texts	
Active voice	150	74%	330	65.7%	480	68%
Passive voice	52	26%	172	34.3%	224	32%

Table 1

The first text contains 202 finite verb forms from which 150 instances are active, 52 are passive constructions formed by *be* and past participles of the main verb. In percentage, the results are: 74.4% active forms to 26.6% passive.

In the second text, there are 502 finite verb forms. 330 represent active forms and 172 are in the passive voice: 65.7% active voice, 34.3% passive voice.

The occurrence of the passive voice in both the texts averages 32% of all the finite verb forms, active 68%.

It is important to mention a case that might be considered on the border or fuzzy. It is a construction which was included among active sentences; it may superficially look as a passive construction (from Text 2). It is a phrase consisting from *be* + past

participle with the negative prefix *un-*. The verb is a copular verb and the past participle functions as subject complement.

> Language may therefore be used inappropriately because one or more of the partners in an interaction <u>is uninformed</u> about the social norms of the setting or the social role of another participant. (Text 2 – 29)

It has been explained in this thesis that such construction will not be included in the passive analysis because of the non-existence of the corresponding verb (NOT *uninform*).

Before analysing the passive sentences and after presenting the data obtained from the research, it is important to focus on both the active and passive constructions and to provide some distinction between them. We can see various cases when the sentences are:

- active (and "unpassive") – passive is not possible
- passive – active is not possible
- active – both types of voice are possible
- passive – both types of voice are possible

What the first eventuality concerns, we can find many examples (almost half of them) in the texts where the passive voice is not permitted. It can be examples of those verbs that do not take an object: intransitive verbs

> …the teacher <u>interacts</u> appropriately but not enthusiastically. (Text 2)

and copular verbs

> The Pragmatic Protocol <u>was</u> the result of a number of years theoretical and clinical work by Prutting and Kirchner. (Text 2)

> Conceptual complexity is characterised as an "aspect of language functioning that seems essential to effective skill in discourse". (Text 2 – 15)

Another restriction is placed by middle verbs (*lack, have*):

> Therapists therefore <u>lacked</u> a framework within which to identify pragmatic difficulties and to analyse what processes within a conversation gave rise to them. (Text 2)

Verb phrases formed by linking verbs (mainly *be*) followed by a subject complement represent the majority of the only-active options in the sample texts. Although they do not express action, hence they cannot be classified as being in active, they are included in the group of active sentences in this analysis.

The passive is not possible when the active object is a non-finite clause: infinitive

> … they frequently fail <u>to maintain</u> topic or <u>to enable</u> the listener to follow the speaker's line of thought. (Text 2)

NOT … <u>to maintain</u> topic or to enable the listener <u>to follow</u> the speaker's line of thought is frequently failed (by them).

or gerund

> … she has just started walking to school. (Text 2)

NOT … <u>walking</u> to school has just been started (by her).

The second group is formed by the only-passive constructions. It is the case of adjectival passives, where constructions consist of a copular verb *be* and participle functioning as an adjective. They cannot have an active counterpart because they are not true passives. They look like passives due to their structure. However, considered semantically, they do not express process where agent and patient are involved but they describe the state of the subject. However, since there are verbs from which the past participle was formed, they are regarded as passive in this thesis.

> The consideration of social communication <u>is</u> thus <u>not limited</u> to pragmatic skills but places communicative appropriateness within the broader context of the child s social competence. (Text 2 – 40)

In order to identify that the the participle functions as adjective, as explained in the theoretical part, another copular verb can be used instead of *be*:

> The consideration of social communication <u>does</u> thus <u>not look limited</u> to pragmatic skills but places communicative appropriateness within the broader context of the child s social competence ….

It can also be modified by *very*: The consideration … <u>is</u> thus <u>not very limited to</u> pragamtic skill … .

Another case belonging to the only-passive group is represented by verbs which most typically appear in the passive or are only used in the passive voice.

> The Cooperative Principle <u>is based on</u> four maxims requiring contributions to a conversation to be informative (maxim of quantity), truthful (maxim of quality), relevant (maxim of relevance) and clear (maxim of manner). (Text 2 – 23)

Such cases will be mentioned again later in the following chapter.

The last case of the only passive sentences is the one where there is no agency at all.

> Discourse is concerned with stretches of language, especially spoken language, which go beyond the sentence level and constitute a recognisable communicative event. (Text 2 – 10)

The two other possibilities – both active and passive sentences are possible – are not dependent on the lexical and grammatical nature of the verbs but they are chosen on the basis of the author's intention what and how they want to communicate their message.

The case when the sentence is active but is permitted to form the passive is exemplified below:

> He thus showed the lack of semantic specificity listed as one of the characteristics of semantic-pragmatic disorder. (Text 2)

Concerning the criteria for stating that the sentence is possible to occur in the passive, we can say that the sentence contains a basic order of information structure of canonical sentences. The agent is in the initial position, it functions as the subject and it is thematic indicated by a personal pronoun referring to a boy called *D.*. It is followed by a transitive verb phrase that is transitional and followed by the rhematic part – object, which is post-modified. The verb can form the passive voice and the form of the object allows the function of the passive subject. However, the active voice is syntactically and functionally fully acceptable and thus the passive would break communicative dynamism.

The cases of passive sentences that can form the active counterparts are presented and analysed in Chapter 11.

10. Lexico-grammatical analysis

Let us focus on passive sentences occurring in the texts. At the very beginning of the analysis of the passive sentences, the attention is paid to the lexico-grammatical factor.

10.1 Verb classification

As far as the verbs typically or frequently used in the passive concerns, as it was mentioned above, such constructions are found in the text as the examples present:

> Recently, however, the concept of the functional load of phonemes <u>has been subjected to</u> adverse criticism by the American linguist Robert D. King. (Text 1 – 2)

> It is of course true – and hardly anybody will deny this – that the entities of higher language levels <u>are</u> much more closely <u>linked to</u> the extra-lingual reality to be communicated than the entities of the lowest, phonic level.

The number of such verbs (*be based on* (3 examples), *be regarded as* (4 examples), *be subjected to* (1 example), *be linked to* (1 example)) is rather small because of the rather small size of the sample.

Ditransitive verbs in the passive voice are rather rare as Dušková asserts (2005) – 2.68% of all the passive forms in her study. In both the texts, the percentage of distransitive verbs is less than 1%. In fact, only two examples (*show sb sth*, *enable sb sth*) occur in the samples.

> D. was shown a picture of several boys who were either riding, walking, running, skipping (etc.) at school. (Text 2 – 59)

It is a verb of which both direct and indirect object can become a passive subject. In the text, the indirect object (*D.*) functions as the passive subject. The sentence with the direct object in the role of the subject would be: *A picture of several boys who were either riding, walking, running, skipping (etc.) at school was shown to D.*.

The other verb has restrictions what passivization concerns:

> D. was thus effectively enabled to grasp that the general semantic term going was not appropriate here and to develop a strategy of finding 'better' or more specific words. (Text 2 – 60)

Since the verb has the direct object in the form of a *to*-infinitive, which is a clause, and the indirect object is a noun phrase, the indirect object can be placed in the passive as the subject. This condition has been mentioned in Chapter 3.2 (Dušková, 1994, p.252).

In the theoretical part, rather great attention was paid to **prepositional passives**. The analysis shows that there is a high number of prepositional passives that appear in the texts.

	Text 1 (52 passives)	Text 2 (172 passives)
total number of prepositional passives	16	49
single prepositional passives	8	21
two-object prepositional passives	8	28

Table 2

Before providing instances from the texts, a list of the example verbs used in the texts is presented:

verbs with one object

- phrasal verbs: *point out, work out, draw up, carry out, hint at, put forward*
- prepositional verbs: *call upon, account for, allow for, provide for, reckon with, refer to*

two-object prepositional verbs

- *isolate sth from sth, confine sth to sth, base sth on sth, judge sth on sth, subject sth to sth, describe sth as sth, characterize sth as sth, suit sth to sth, view sth as sth, distinguish sth from sth, associate sth with sth,*

From Table 2, it is obvious that prepositional passives are used rather frequently in the texts. They occur in almost one third of all the passive forms.

Taking into account the above presented list and Table 2, the verbs requiring only one object are not applied as much as two-object prepositional verbs. This proves that one-object prepositional and phrasal verbs are not favoured in the passive since many of them are not possible to be passivized because of the meaning they convey (semantic cohesion). On the other hand, two-object prepositional verbs form the passive very commonly.

The following example contains a phrasal verb. There is a high degree of semantic cohesion of the two parts (the verb *draw* and the particle *up*) since they together form a new idiomatic meaning. This fact makes the verb "passivizable".

> Damico's Clinical Discourse Analysis <u>was drawn up</u> by using transcripts of communicatively impaired children to identify those errors which were most apt to interfere with discourse and which were also readily identifiable by Professional. (Text 2 – 21)

Prepositional verb in the next example combines a verb (*provide*) with its own lexical meaning and the preposition (*for*) has an intensifying function.

> With the relatively very small number of phonemes and with the immensity of the task to be performed by phonemic combinations, some necessary pre-requisites of their functioning must <u>be provided for</u>. (Text 1 – 40)

In the next instance from the excerpts, it is obvious that with two-object verbs direct object is employed as a passive subject and the indirect object stays in the post-verbal position, which was also pointed out in Chapter 3.1.4.

> In research, profiles on the Pragmatic Protocol can be used in investigating which patterns of pragmatic strength and weakness <u>are associated with</u> subjects in particular clinical groups, these groups being defined in terms of cognitive and linguistic abilities. (Text 2 – 116)

As Dušková (1994, p. 251-2) said, construction like *call sth into question* can also be used in the passive form. Again, the direct object in the active functions as the passive subject.

> These are crucial considerations, since a theoretical framework of this kind <u>must be called into question</u> if it does not give rise to valid assessment procedures for language-impaired populations and to effective remedial approaches. (Text 2 – 20)

The verbs used in the prepositional passives are semantically cohesive and many of them are possible to be replaced by a single-word synonym (*point out – mention*, *work out – solve*, *call upon – ask*, *demand*).

Modal verbs have been proved to be common in the passive, as it was described in Chapter 3.1.5. From all the passive construction, modal verbs form almost a quarter of the examples.

	Text 1 (52 passives)	Text 2 (172 passives)
can	5	24
could	1	1
must	8	1
have to	0	1
should	2	3
should + perfect	1	0
may	2	8
might	1	0
might + perfect	0	1
total	20	39

Table 3

The most common ones are *can*, *must* and *may*. According to Table 3, it is apparent that *can* is numerous, and, as the example shows, as well as *may*, it is used in the passive to express possibility. *Must* expresses obligation.

> A connection <u>can be seen</u> here between a child's difficulty with the conceptual complexity of a topic and the impairment of pragmatic competence. (Text 2 – 19)

> But in principle the author's effort is certainly praiseworthy, and the result obtained by him in this field <u>must be appreciated</u> as a step in the right direction. (Text 1 – 11)

> There are also occasions when one of the parameters of these supplementary aspects, in particular gesture, <u>may be used</u> to replace a verbal parameter. (Text 2 – 68)

What the modal in perfect aspect concerns, two examples appear in the texts.

> There might be some doubt, perhaps, whether the author's conception of "phonic environment", amounting to "one phoneme to the left and right" <u>should not have been stated</u> in finer terms. (Text 1 – 10)

The modal verb *should* + perfect expresses obligation that was not fulfilled in the past, the meaning of the modal is the same for both active and passive voice.

> Prutting and Kirchner suggest that if the group had been divided into subgroups, with a number of different clinical profiles, each <u>might have been</u>

> found to be associated with a distinct pattern of pragmatic deficit.
> (Text 2 – 135)

Might + perfect in this case is a part of a conditional clause expressing possibility in the past.

What the negative of modal verbs concerns, let us have a look at two examples taken from Text 1.

> The phonological system cannot be precisely and unreservedly separated from other aspects of language … here, too, language present itself as a complex of inseparable, mutually interdependent facts which cannot be separated into independent categories by the most rigorous linguistic analysis . (Text 1 – 18)

Both the modal constructions express possibility "it is not possible to separate…". When taking into account the active counterparts without any context

> We cannot separate the phonological system from other aspects of language … facts which we cannot separate into dependent categories…

the modal can be analysed as expressing either possibility or ability.

Biber and Quirk (1999, p.478) provide a table in which they show the frequency of particular lexical verbs with the passive. Verbs *make*, *give*, *use*, *find* and *see* are the most frequent ones in academic prose. Moreover, some verbs are common in the passive in a single register. The verbs listed by the linguists that are also frequently used in the analyzed texts are: *made* (7 instances) and *used* (10 instances) – all in Text 2.

10.2   Passive subject

Chapter 3.2 dealt with different forms of object in the active that functions as subject in the passive counterparts. When analysing the subject, the subjects which had been ellipted were also taken into consideration.

Noun phrases functioning as the subject are the most usual case (95%). Most of the phrasal subjects are formed by a noun as a head of the phrase (almost 74%).

> Utterances are coded on a complexity scale of 1 to 4 and also in terms of appropriateness of response. (Text 2 – 16)

The other group of phrasal subjects represent pronouns (21%). Personal (*it, they*) or demonstrative pronouns (*this*, *these*, *those*) most of which *it* appears in the texts make 11.2% (in 3 instances *it* was implied in clauses like: *As can be seen*).

> This is, of course, very strong language, and examination of the author's arguments will reveal that it is far from justified. (Text 1 – 6)

The second largest pronominal group is created by relative pronouns (*which*, *that*, *what*) and they are used in 8% of all the passive subjects.

> In justifying the use of this Protocol as a theoretical basis it is, however, necessary to respond to criticisms which have been made of its potential practical application. (Text 2 – 78)

A few examples of indefinite pronouns (*each*, *none*, *one*) also appear in the texts (less than 2%).

> This, of course, amounts to emphasizing the well-known fact that mutual communications is based in entities of all level of language […], none of which can be isolated from the rest. (Text 1 – 14)

What clausal subjects concerns, it was explained under which circumstances a subordinate clause can function as a passive subject. If a finite clause is in question, putting the subject in the post-verbal position with anticipatory *it* in the initial position is a common means in passivization. Such sentences with extraposed passive subject occur in the texts in 3,1% (2 instances in Text 1, 5 instances in Text 2).

> To this statement it could be objected that language processes need not, and mostly do not, enter the speaker's consciousness, which, however, detracts nothing from their functional importance. (Text 1 – 35)

Considering the fact, that gerund subjects in passive sentences are not common at all, we should assume that even the analysed texts are low in them. One example is used in the excerpts.

> In the examples given in the previous two paragraphs, interpreting a conversational partner's need to know is seen by one commentator as a pragmatic skill but by the other as a skill of social cognition. (Text 2 – 91)

Infinitives in the function of passive subject do not occur in either text.

10.3   Agents

It was mentioned several times that the agent is the entity that causes the event and it syntactically functions in active sentences as subject. It does not need to be expressed. Furthermore, passive verb phrases not completed by the agent are more frequent than the ones with the agent.

In this research, the agentless passives amount to 196 (Text 1: 38; Text 2: 158) from 224 passive clauses (Figure 2, Table 4). These figures also include cases when the element following the passive verb phrase is with a preposition *by* but its semantic function is instrumental, not agentive.
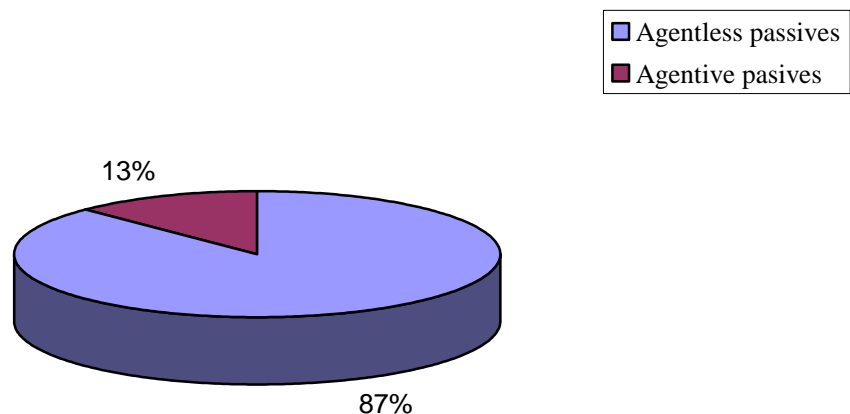

☐ Agentless passives
■ Agentive pasives

13%

87%

Figure 2

	Text 1 (52 passives)		Text 2 (172 passives)		Total (224 passives)	
Agentless	38	73%	158	92%	196	87.5%
Animate agents	7	13.5%	11	6%	18	8 %
Inanimate agents	7	13.5%	3	2%	10	4.5%

Table 4

Let us now focus on the outcomes concerning the agents (Table 4). In the two excerpts, there are 27 examples of expressed agent. Most of the agents are animate usually expressing various authors (proper nouns and names).

> The diversity of possible definitions and lack of clear boundaries in the field has been discussed <u>by Levinson</u> in a major work on pragmatics. (Text 2 – 6)

It was said in Chapter 3.3 that agents are usually animate. However, when looking at the figures in Table 4, it is obvious that Text 1 contains as many inanimate agents as the animate ones. Since the text describes processes in the system of phonemes, animate agents are mentioned mostly in connection with different authors and their conceptions. Many of the examples of inanimate agents are ambiguous from the viewpoint of semantic function (agent vs. instrument) without understanding the course of study of the text.

> But it has been equally clear to us that the complexity of the phonological process cannot always be accounted for <u>by the operation of the factors of the phonic level alone</u>. (Text 1 - 23)

The example above may be perfectly used in active sentence both with the agent as a subject or as an adverbial of instrument:

> … the operation of the factors of the phonic level alone cannot always account for the complexity of the phonological process' or '…we cannot always account for the complexity of the phonological process by the operation of the factors of the phonic level alone'.

The ambiguity may have arisen also due to the character of the verb which allows interpretation either *to be an explanation of cause of sth* or *to give an explanation of sth*.

By-phrases that do not function as agents are placed in this thesis among agentless passives. Since, as I pointed out in the previous paragraph, some of them are ambiguous, they will be mentioned here as well.

Instrumental phrases appear only in 6 passive sentences, all occurring in Text 2.

> This can be illustrated <u>by reference to two procedures</u> designed to assess discourse level skills, Dialogue with Preschoolers (Blank and Franklin, 1980) and The Clinical Discourse Analysis (Damico, 1985). (Text 2 – 14)

The passive sentence when transformed into the active counterpart (*We can illustrate this by reference…*) would still have the *by*-phrase functioning as the instrument since the agent here is implied.

11.   Function of the passive voice

One of the aims of this thesis is to provide explanation why the passive voice is used in the analysed scientific texts from the stylistic, semantic and FSP viewpoint in connection to the function of the passive. This chapter deals with the functions taking into consideration the distinction between agentless and agentive passive as it was described in Chapter 5.1.

11.1   Omitting the agent and stylistic factor

Firstly, agentless passives as the biggest groups of passive clauses (87.5%) are discussed. The figure clearly shows that the possibility of not-expressing the agent is utilized very frequently when producing passive clauses. This fact can be seen as favouring the passive usage in many occasions. However, there are also other factors influencing the choice of the passive voice and in many instances we can find combinations of them.

The reasons why the agents are omitted may vary. However, despite not having their agent expressed, they contain implied agents. One group of the passive clauses represents agents implying the author or authors of the text (14%). Taking into consideration the style of the texts, it is clear that such passive clauses occur frequently in the excerpts since the author intends to stay in the background in order to be as objective as possible and communicate their knowledge.

> What has been said here so far may give the reader some idea of the various factors that assert themselves in the phonological development of language and of the complex interplay in which these factors are found to participate. (Text 1 – 27)

> The aims of the study will be presented at the end of Chapter 2, following a detailed examination of the pragmatic parameter which it investigates the establishment of referent. (Text 2 – 137)

If the active was used, the agent would be in the form of a personal pronoun *we*, which is avoided in scientific style in order to retain its objectiveness.

What we have said so far may give the reader…

We will present the aims of the study at the end of Chapter 2,…

The passive verb phrase in example below is followed by a *by*-phrase but is still agentless passive implying the author:

> This can be illustrated by reference to a procedure for assessing social communication. (Text 2 – 14)

The phrase *by reference* functions as an instrument; in the active it does not stand for an active subject. The agent is still unexpressed implying the author as can be seen in the active counterpart.

We illustrate this by reference ….

In order to retain the text impersonal and the author's possibility to distance themselves from the direct responsibility, the passive is a useful device. Modal verb *must* in the passive reduces the degree of obligation while the verb *can* together with the passive enables the writer to avoid direct statements.

> These are crucial considerations, since a theoretical framework of this kind must be called into question if it does not give rise to valid assessment procedures for language-impaired populations and to effective remedial approaches. (Text 2 – 80)

> These can be summarised as follows:… (Text 2 – 75)

On the other hand, in Text 1 (14 examples), there are several examples of sentences when the agent (author) formed by *we* is expressed as it functions as the subject of the active sentences. In Text 2, there is only one example.

> We made a special point in delimiting the operation of the factor of functional load by the operation of other factors, mainly by the above-mentioned factor of the systemic integration of the phonemes concerned. (Text 2)

Another reason why the agent is omitted is when it is known from the previous context and its repeating would be redundant; again the attention is paid to the results of the researchers. As for the samples, those agents are usually writers, scholars or therapists other than the author of the text (25%). Other cases (8%) are implied agents that refer to different human agents.

> An adequate inter-rater reliability was obtained and utterances marked as inappropriate were categorised. (Text 2 – 48)

In the above example, the agent would be either *they* referring to *Bishop and Adams* or the noun phrase itself. Both options are undesired because the agent would be repeated (*Bishop and Adams*) or the pronoun in the form of an active *they* and passive *by them* are avoided in scientific style The agent is unexpressed in the whole paragraph describing the research except the first and the last sentence.

According to the grammarians, most of the implied agents refer to an indefinite human not known from the context or known to the author. In the case of the analysed texts, this also is proved thanks to the research (30%).

> It may serve as a most welcome background against which may be aptly reflected what appears to be the genuine part played by the functional load of phonemes in the Prague conception of the phonological development of language. (Text 1 – 4)

> The problem is of pressing practical concern since in recent years speech and language therapists have increasingly been called upon to work with people who have adequate formal language skills, but whose verbal communication is, in varying degrees, inappropriate. (Text 2 – 7)

In the active form,

> ... and people have increasingly called upon the language therapist to work with people who have adequate formal language skill, ...

such agent would be most probably expressed by pronouns *somebody*, *one*, *we* or *they*, or also *people* can be used. All these expressions are not used in scientific writing because they do not carry any information relevant for the context. If we consider their expressing in the passive clauses in *by*-phrase, even in written English generally they would be too vague unless they are emphasized by the speaker.

However, we can find examples of active sentences when the subject is formed by the devices mentioned above. Examples that have *one* as their subjects occur in both the texts – Text 1 (5), Text 2 (1). Another pronoun used in the texts (Text 1: 3 examples) in reference to the indefinite general human agent is *we*.

> One may also choose to take a focus of this kind in making a pragmatic analysis. (Text 2)

> … all of us can find ourselves in the situations in which we do not find in the language a word or a phrase adequate to the idea we want to express. (Text 1)

The last type of agentless passives that occur in the texts represents the passive constructions without any agent at all (6%). Due to this fact, they cannot form the active constructions. These sentences occur quite frequently in the analysed texts.

> Only in passing we want to refer here to our paper dealing with the Czech phoneme /ř/ which is very unsatisfactorily integrated in the Czech system of consonant phonemes, but still is upheld in it thanks to the important part belonging to it in the morphological pattern of Present Day Czech language. (Text1 – 26)

> Story telling skills of this kind are related to the level of sophistication of the narrative construction, rather than to any potential inappropriateness. (Text 2 – 13)

Dušková in her study (1999, p.121) points out the cases when there is no agency involved. She considers many of these examples as free variants of the active sentences. Such constructions appear in the texts several times especially with the verb *concern*.

> Pragmatic assessment is thus carried out in relation to the linguistic content of specific discourse, such as a conversation, but involves only those aspects of discourse which are concerned with appropriateness. (Text 2 – 27)

The verb in passive clause above could be transformed in the active form without a significant change of meaning.

> Pragmatic assessment is thus carried out in relation to the linguistic content of specific discourse, such as a conversation, but involves only those aspects of discourse concerns appropriateness.

As the above analysis shows, there are several situations concerning not-expressing the agent in passive sentences and as it is obvious, they occur in almost 9 of 10 instances in the analysed texts, hence this is the major function of the passive voice. The agent as the source or cause of the event stays in the background and is indicated by the context if implied.

11.2   Theme and rheme placement and other factors

Together with the omission of the agent (in the case of agentless passives) as the main function of the passive frequently used in scientific writing, there is another important aspect that makes the passive a useful means for the writer to organise their texts effectively (Chapter 8.2.2). Structuring the information in a sentence according to its degree of communicative dynamism is essential in English. The passive is favoured in cases when the active voice cannot provide the right order of sentence elements according to their communicative dynamism. Furthermore, in scientific style, the elements are preferably arranged according to topic-event pattern making the text less personal and bringing into focus what is being described.

Focusing again on the passives without an expressed agent, we can see that not only omission of the agent but also the functional sentence perspective plays a part here. The distribution of old and new information within a sentence was already explained: theme as old information is placed in the initial position, rheme as new information is placed in the final position. In agentless passives, the verb phrase is not followed by the agent but it can be followed by adverbials, complements, objects or the verb itself is in the final position. This fact makes it possible to put the active object which is the recipient in the initial position if it is thematic and thus the rhematic parts – the verb or other elements – appear in the right rhematic position.

The option when the verb becomes rhematic in the passive sentence and thus is placed in its right position is present in the texts:

> These data enable the author to establish the "functional load indices", which as a rule range between 0,500 and 5,000, "though both smaller and larger functional loads are not infrequently obtained". (Text 1 – 8)

> While the comprehensiveness of the Pragmatic Protocol ensures that instances of the inappropriate use of language in context can be identified and categorised, this does not in itself resolve the question raised at the beginning of this chapter of the relationship between pragmatics and other levels of language. (Text 2 – 82)

In the former example, we can see that the verb is in the final position. Together with the adverbial *infrequently* and the negative *not* the verb is made rhematic conveying new information. Also the subject of the clause *both smaller and larger functional loads* is known from the previous context and thus it is thematic. In the active sentence

… we do not infrequently obtain both smaller and larger functional loads.

the rhematic verb is placed earlier in the sentences than it is desired and it loses its dynamism. Furthermore, the implied general human agent would be expressed by *we*, which is avoided in scientific style.

In the latter example (Text 2 – 82), the coordinated verb phrases *can be identified and categorised* are clearly rhematic. The passive subject would become an object in the active sentence which as a thematic element would occupy the wrong position and again the indefinite general human agent is difficult to be expressed.

… that we can identify and categorise instances of the inappropriate use of language in the context…

Another point to consider is also the fact that the active clause by employing the agent (*we*) would introduce another element which would be redundant and vague.

As for agentless passives, it was mentioned in this chapter that the verb can be followed by other rhematic elements which thanks to the passive are in their rhematic position while the verb has transitional function and the subject is thematic.

But in principle the author's effort is certainly praiseworthy, and the results obtained by him in this field must be appreciated as a step in the right direction. (Text 1 – 11)

The subject *the results* is thematic, which is indicated by the anaphoric device (*the*), the verb is transitional and enables the rhematic part to appear after it. In the active sentence, the rise of communicative dynamism would be disturbed because the object (*the results*) would follow the verb, which carries more new information.

In the example below, the subject is thematic (also indicated by the anaphoric device), the verb being transitional is followed by a rhematic element.

> In both these groups the contributions of fewer than 5% of the children were judged inappropriate on the parameter of Specificity/ Accuracy or on that of Cohesion. (Text 2 – 128)

In this case, the graduality of communicative dynamism would be even more disrupted in the active counterpart due to the length of the passive subject (*the contributions of fewer than 5% of the children*).

> In both these groups, the therapist judged the contributions of fewer than 5% of the children inappropriate on the parameter of Specificity/ Accuracy or on that of Cohesion.

In sentences, where there is the same subject within more clauses, the reason for choosing the passive is maintaining the same subject which can be considered as functional sentence perspective factor as the subject is certainly thematic.

> Robert D. King tried to demonstrate, [..], that "functional load, [..], is one of the least important of those we know anything about and that it is best regarded in discussion centering on the cause and direction of phonological change" (p. 831, Summary prefaced to the paper). (Text 1 – 5)

The subject in the second clause *functional load* is mentioned again in the fourth clause expressed by the personal pronoun *it* which is an anaphoric device referring to previous text.

On the other hand, in some instances, it can be clearly seen that functional sentence perspective is not involved as the factor enforcing the passive.

> It can thus be seen that there is a need for therapy to go beyond working on individual pragmatic problems, such as the use of over-general semantic terms

> to an approach which locates such problems within an overall view of
> pragmatic competence. (Text 2 – 61)

In the example above, the subject is not in the initial position; it is extraposed and follows the verb. It is rhematic and formed by a *that*-clause. The agent which is unexpressed implies general human agent. When analysing the active counterpart of this sentence,

> We can thus see that there is a need for therapy to go beyond working on
> individual pragmatic problems, …

it is obvious that the arrangement of communicative dynamism does not differ in both the active and passive sentences. It, as well as *we*, carries the lowest degree of communicative dynamism and the rhematic part (*that*-clause) stays in the same position. The passive in this sentence is used for the purpose of omitting the agent because it is unimportant and formed by a personal pronoun.

Agentive passives unlike agentless passives have all the elements as an active sentence would contain. The choice of the passive is thus based mainly on the effort to satisfy functional sentence perspective demands.

> It is fair to state that, again, this conclusion had been anticipated, almost four
> decades ago, by the protagonists of the Prague linguistic group, especially by
> R. Jakobson. (Text 1 – 31)

In the example provided above, we can notice thanks to the demonstrative pronoun *this* that the subject does not present new information, it is something known form the context and it occupies the initial thematic position. At the same time, the agent *by the protagonists of the Prague linguistic group, especially by R. Jakobson* carries new information, the agent is made even more rhematic due to the detailed specification of the agent (*especially by R. Jakobson*); it can be considered that also end-weight principle is applied here due to the length of the agent. When looking at the sentence in the active voice

> It is fair to state that, again, the protagonist of the Prague linguistic group,

especially R. Jakobson, had anticipated this conclusion almost four decades
ago.

the agent functioning as the subject is rather "heavy" to be placed in the initial
position, while the object obviously thematic occupies rhematic position incorrectly.

The passive belongs to a number of means used for structuring information within
clauses. Inversion is another one. In the texts, there is an example of the combination of
these two:

> Also included are accurate responses which violate the turn-taking rule of
> conciseness by being over-informative. (Text 2 – 20)

When analysing the sentence which precedes this passive one, it is obvious that
such inversion occurs also in this active one ("Into this category fall responses which
are accurate in content..."). The subject is post-modified by a relative clause as it is in
the passive one. In the active sentence, the inversion is used due to the "heaviness"
(end-focus) and rhematic nature of the inverted subject. Besides omission of the agent,
such pattern is used in the following passive sentence (Text 2 – 20).

Usage of the passive voice in many instances in the texts appears to be a question
of avoiding the elements that would be redundant in the active, i.e. agent as the active
subject. It concerns particularly relative clauses.

> In a paper of our own, published almost twelve years ago, we insisted on the
> necessity of acknowledging a kind of fine interplay that can be established
> between the quantitative and qualitative factors operating in the development
> of the phonological system of language. (Text 1 – 21)

In the active counterpart,

   ... that we can establish between ... .

the functional sentence perspective does not change. The problem arises only
because of the number of participants, which is increased by introducing *we* in the
active sentence and, moreover, it does not carry any new information.

> The schemes of Bedrosian and of Ripich and Spinelli relate to discourse but are included here because they are confined to the pragmatic aspects of discourse as discussed above. (Text 2 – 64)

The above sentence exemplifies another case of using the passive in order to avoid redundant elements. The subject of the first clause, which is active, persists in the second passive clause; it is ellipted. However, it could be ellipted only provided that it remains functioning as the subject which can be achieved thanks to the passive voice.

Sometimes the passive is chosen only due to the stylistic requirement that prefers topic-event ordering of the elements.

> An interesting adaptation of this approach was used in a research study by Bishop and Adams (1989) in which the authors and a third judge independently scanned transcripts of conversations of a group of language impaired children and a group of controls and identified utterances they judged to be inappropriate. (Text 2 – 36)

The rhematic part of the first clause is clearly the subject which carries new information, however, it is placed in initial position. Thus the passive is not used as means of functional sentence perspective but because of the ordering of semantic roles: topic – event.

12.   Conclusion

The second part of the thesis focuses on the results from the analysis of two English texts written in scientific style. At the beginning, the characteristics of the scientific language was described by pointing out the usage of the passive voice as an important means for retaining the text objective and impersonal.

Although the passive is used frequently, the active voice is much more preferred. It was assumed that almost 25% of all the finite verb forms will be passive. The outcomes of the research show that the passive in the sample texts is used even more frequently.

32% (Text 1: 26%; Text 2: 34.3%) of all the finite verb forms in the texts are in the passive voice most of which are able to form an active counterpart.

On the other hand, 68% of the verb forms are active, half of which is not possible to form the passive voice. Majority of these constructions consist of the copular *be* and a subject complement. Others are intransitive verbs, middle verbs or the restriction is caused by the form of the object.

The sentences having their verb in the passive, considered form the lexico-grammatical viewpoint, are classified according to the verb, the subject and the agent. Many of the passive constructions contain modal auxiliaries; the most frequent one is *can.* Another very frequently used category of verbs are prepositional verbs taking two objects.

Passive subjects are mostly formed by a noun phrase (95%) with nouns or pronouns as their heads, however, a few examples of clausal subjects occur in the texts, especially extraposed *that-* or *whether*-clauses.

Agentless passives account for 87.5% from all the passive sentences, which is more than it was assumed in the hypothesis (90%). Minority of the agentive passives (12.5%) contains 13% of animate agents, 4.5% inanimate.

In connection to the agentless passives, the function of the passive voice is stated: omission of the agent. The unexpressed agent implies the author of the texts (14%). It is used to avoid the personal pronoun and focus on the results presented. Avoiding repetition, information vagueness and the usage of personal pronouns, the agent referring to other researchers (25%) or different human beings (8%) is unexpressed. The most common case (30%) is, however, when the agent implies an indefinite general human. The passive is used when there is no agent at all (6%), thus the active is not possible.

Agentive passives, on the other hand, are used in order to correspond with functional sentences perspective. Thanks to the passive, the elements are ordered according to their degree of communicative dynamism.

The topic-event pattern preferred in scientific style may agree with the functional sentence perspective but it is applied even if the rhematic element in the sentence occupies initial position. Another function recognized in the texts is to maintain the

same subject throughout a range of clauses and to avoid another element, informationally unimportant in many instances.

III. Resumé

Trpný rod je jeden z typických znaků odborného stylu. Přestože v mnoha příručkách technického a odborného psaní se uvádí, že by se mu mělo vyhýbat, podle slovníku Webster's Dictionary (1994, 720-21) je trpný rod používán stále častěji a to především vzdělanými lidmi.

Název této práce zní Trpný rod v anglickém odborném stylu a, jak je již napovězeno, cílem prvním, teoretické části této práce je trpný rod a jeho tvoření, význam, použití; druhá, praktická část se snaží zmapovat jeho výskyt v souvislosti s rodem činným v odborném textu a zároveň se zaměřit na jeho funkci.

První a druhá kapitola definuje pojem rod a jeho podkategorie aktivum a pasivum, vyjadřuje vztah mezi nimi a popisuje proces pasivizace. Rod v anglickém jazyce stejně jako v českém jazyce vyjadřuje, v jakém syntakticko-sémantickém vztahu jsou účastníci slovesného děje k slovesnému ději. V rodě činném je konatelem podmět věty, následuje sloveso a po něm cíl děje jako předmět. V rodě trpném však dochází k reorganizaci jednotlivých účastníků děje a ke změně formy slovesa. Předmět věty v aktivu se stává podmětem věty pasivní, cíl děje je tedy posunut na první místo ve větě. Sloveso je složeno z určitého tvaru pomocného slovesa *be* a minulého příčestí lexikálního slovesa. Podmět aktiva je vyjádřen v předložkové vazbě *by*: *John kissed Mary ~ Mary was kissed by John (John políbil Mary ~ Mary byla políbena Johnem).* Rozdíl mezi aktivem a pasivem je nejen v uspořádání větných členů, ale také v jejich povinném počtu. V aktivu jsou oba účastníci děje obligatorní, v pasivu však činitel děje nemusí být vyjádřen. Tvary trpného rodu jsou pak rozděleny na agentive (s vyjádřením činitelem) neboli dlouhé a na agentless (s nevyjádřeným činitelem) neboli krátké.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá vysvětlením podmínek, za jakých pasivum nelze tvořit, za jakých je možné použití pouze pasiva a jaká další omezení se vyskytují s ohledem na druhy sloves. Slovesa intranzitivní, která nemají podmět, nemohou tvořit trpný rod, protože neexistuje aktivní předmět, který by sloužil jako pasivní podmět. Slovesa jako *have*, *lack*, *fit*, *cost*, která jsou nazývána *middle verbs*, a slovesa symetrická (*resemble*, *equal*, atd.) také netvoří pasivum. Na druhou stranu vazby sloves skládajících se z předmětu a infinitivní konstrukce jsou možná pouze v trpném rodě (*John was said to be a good teacher*), stejně tak jsou určité vazby upřednostňovány v trpném rodě (*be based on*, *be subjected to*). Co se týče sloves s předložkou, faktor mající vliv na

možnost pasivizace je míra těsnosti vztahu mezi slovesem a předložkou. Čím více je předložka nebo částice u frázových sloves součástí významu slovesa, případně tvoří společně nový význam, tím větší je i schopnost pasívum tvořit. Ditransitivní slovesa mající přímý a nepřímý předmět jsou schopna tvořit pasivum bez omezení. Závisí na kontextu a mluvčím, zda to bude přímý či nepřímý předmět, který bude plnit funkci pasivního podmětu. Některá modální slovesa se v trpném rodě vyskytují poměrně často, některá z nich však mění význam.

Možnost tvořit pasívum závisí také na předmětu v činném rodě. Ve třetí kapitole jsou vysvětleny případy, kdy je možné a kdy ne použít aktivní předmět jako podmět v rodě trpném. Pokud je předmět tvořen substantivní frází, pasivum se tvoří vždy s výjimkou zájmen zvratných (*himself*), recipročních (*each other*) a přivlastňovacích, pokud jsou ve vztahu s podmětem (*The woman shook her head*). V případě, že předmětem je věta vedlejší s vyjádřeným časem, může fungovat jako podmět, pokud je posunuta za sloveso a v pozici podmětu zastoupena zájmenem *it*. U vedlejších vět s nevyjádřeným časem jsou omezení větší.

V angličtině je konatel v pasivu vyjádřen v předložkové by-frázi. Je ovšem možné označit takovou frázi za vyjadřující konatele pouze v případě, pokud je příčinou děje a ne nástrojem (*The window had been broken by the storm* vs. *The window had been broken by the stone*)

Čtvrtá kapitola nese název *Význam*. Zabývá se v první řadě změnou významu věty aktivní a jejího pasivního protějšku. Tato změna je převážně způsobena posunutím důrazu, rozsahu působení záporu v obou větách, rozsahu kvantifikátorů a také omezením nebo obměněním významu modálních sloves.

Druhá část kapitoly pojednává o významu jednotlivých pasivních konstrukcí. Pasívum v angličtině s použitím slovesa *be* nerozlišuje vyjadřování stavu a děje. Toto rozlišení je možné určit z kontextu. Avšak je možné jasně určit dějové pasívum v případě, že je místo slovesa *be* použito sponové sloveso *get*, které se ovšem používá v méně formálním projevu. Pasívum stavové, jež obsahuje participium blížící se adjektivu, je nazýváno pseudo-pasívum nebo adjektivní pasívum.

Pátá kapitola je předposlední kapitolou teoretické části a jejím cílem je popsat funkce pasíva. Rozdělení jeho funkcí vychází z rozlišení mezi pasívem s nevyjádřeným a vyjádřeným konatelem. Vzhledem k tomu, že pasívum nemusí mít vyjádřeného

konatele, je tato možnost využívána jako jedna z funkcí. Podle studie Duškové (1999) je 90% pasivních konstrukcí bez vyjádřeného konatele. Konatel se nevyjadřuje z důvodů nedůležitosti, neexistence, jeho vyjádření by bylo nadbytečné. Pokud nevyjádřený činitel implikuje neurčitou osobu, je důvodem převážně fakt, že použití slov jako *people*, *one* nebo *we* neplní žádnou informační funkci a jejich použití je zbytečné. Nevyjádřený činitel může implikovat ale i určité osoby, v odborném stylu je to převážně autor sám, který využívá možnosti posunutí své osoby do pozadí a zaměření pozornosti na jeho sdělení. Vyhýbá se tak současně použití osobního zájmena *we*, kterému se odborný styl snaží uniknout. Dalším implikovaným konatelem je velmi často tvůrce nebo tvůrci jiní než autor sám. Dalším velmi častým případem je možnost, kdy není žádný konatel implikován a věta ani nemůže mít svůj aktivní protějšek. Fakt, že nevyjádření konatele je hojně využíváno právě v odborném stylu, jasně ukazuje, že tvoření pasívních konstrukcí je doménou právě tohoto stylu. Na druhé straně v dialozích, kdy je upřednostňován subjektivní přístup, se pasívum nachází mnohem vzácněji.

Konstrukce trpného rodu s vyjádřeným konatelem mají všechny větné členy jako věty v rodě činném. Je tedy jasné, že hlavní funkce pasíva – nevyjádření konatele – zde není využita. V těchto případech je však možné pozorovat, jak pasívum slouží při uspořádání větných členů z hlediska funkční větné perspektivy. V angličtině jsou větné prvky řazeny podle stupně jejich výpovědní dynamičnosti. A tudíž pokud takový slovosled není možný v rodě činném, je ho možno dosáhnout v rodě trpném. Réma,v tomto případě konatel, které by v činném rodě bylo v počáteční pozici věty jakožto podmět, je v rodě trpném postaveno až za slovesem, a tedy se nachází na správném místě z hlediska funkční větné perspektivy. Cíl děje, který je znám z kontextu a je proto tématem, plní funkci předmětu a také je na správné pozici. Z hlediska stylistického je takové rozmístění větných prvků výhodné, protože odborný styl upřednostňuje prezentování sdělení v pořadí topic-event (námět – událost) před agent-action (konatel – děj). V případě, že réma se v trpném rodě nachází na začátku věty, je právě takový slovosled aplikován z důvodu topic-event pořadí.

Pasívum se také využívá v případě souvětí, kdy autor chce zachovat stejný podmět ve všech jeho částech. Další jeho funkce dává možnost vyhnout se použití dalšího větného členu ve vedlejších přívlastkových větách.

Poslední kapitola shrnuje jevy popsané v teoretické části a nastiňuje obsah části praktické.

Praktická část začíná popisem výzkumu, který je založen na analýze dvou anglických textů psaných v odborném stylu. Výzkum se zaměřuje pouze na slovesné vazby s určitým vyjádřením času (finite verb forms). Stanovené hypotézy tvrdí, že zastoupení pasíva v analyzovaných textech je 25%, přičemž 90% z nich jsou bez vyjádřeného konatele, což naznačuje hypotézu, která přepokládá hlavní funkci pasíva v textech – vypuštění konatele.

Následující kapitola (8.) vyjmenovává typické rysy textu psaných v odborném stylu. Poukazuje na to, že takový text je sestaven logicky, stručně a přesně. Autor popisuje fakta pravdivě, vyvarovává se subjektivního citového hodnocení. Syntax odborného stylu má také své rysy, přičemž trpný rod je jedním z nich. Slovní zásoba určitého odvětví popisuje přesně dané jevy, a jako taková mimo dané odvětví se nevyskytuje, stejně tak ani synonymní výrazy v daném odborném kontextu neexistují.

Kapitola devátá představuje výsledky kvantitativního výzkumu, jehož cílem bylo zjistit výskyt trpného rodu v daných textech. 32% slovesných frází je tvořeno trpným rodem., z nichž většina je schopna tvořit své aktivní protějšky. Na druhou stranu 68% zastupují aktivní vazby, z nichž polovina není schopna tvořit pasivní konstrukce. Převahu těchto konstrukcí představují vazby spojového slovesa *be* a doplňku.

Další kapitola popisuje použité struktury sloves, pasivních podmětu a agentů. Poměrně velký počet pasivních konstrukcí je tvořeno pomocí modálních sloves, z nichž nejčetnější je *can*. Další hojně se objevující kategorie jsou slovesa předložková, zejména slovesa s dvěma předměty (*associate something with something*). Pasivní podměty jsou nejvíce zastoupeny ve formě substantivní fráze (podstatné jméno nebo zájmeno), vedlejší věty se objevují v malém počtu a to především se spojkou *that* a *whether*. Pasivní tvary bez vyjádřeného konatele se vyskytují v 87,5% všech trpných tvarů, vyjádřených konatelů je 13% životných a 4,5% neživotných.

Kapitola jedenáctá se zaměřuje na druhou hlavní část výzkumu, kde se popisuje funkce pasíva v daných textech. Hlavní funkce pasíva se naskýtá v souvislosti s nevyjádřením konatele. Autorské pasívum, neboli nevyjádřený konatel implikující autora, se vyskytuje ve 14% všech trpných tvarů a je ho použito z důvodu objektivnosti

textu. 25% nevyjádřených konatelů implikuje tvůrce jiného než je autor a 8% jsou různé osoby vyjma již zmíněných. Nejvíce implikovaných konatelů je však neurčitých.

Konstrukce trpného rodu s vyjádřeným konatelem jsou použity pro potřeby funkční větné perspektivy. Díky pasívu jsou větné členy řazeny podle jejich stupně výpovědní dynamičnosti. Některé pasivní konstrukce jsou použity pro účely odborného stylu, jiné pro zachování stejného podmětu v rámci souvětí.

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V. Appendices

Appendix I.

Text 1

VACHEK, Josef. *Selected Writings in English and General Linquistics*. Praha:

Academia, 1976.

ON THE EXPLANATORY POWER OF THE FUNCTIONAL LOAD OF
PHONEMES

(1) The functional load of phonemes, defined by the Prague linguistic school as "degré d'utilisation d'une opposition phonoloque pour la différentiation des diverses significations des mots dans une langue donnée" (TCLP 4, 1931, p. 313), has been regarded as a useful concept, especially in the examination of the phonological development of language, not only by the Prague linguistic school itself but also by the adherents of some of the allied linguistic conceptions, mainly by that of André Martinet, who also further developer R. Jakobson's suggestion that a small functional load of phonological opposition may favour its loss in language (see TCLP 4, 1931, p. 259). **(2)** Recently, however, the concept of the functional load of phonemes has been subjected to adverse criticism by the American linguist Robert D. King. **(3)** His paper may be called provocative in the best sense of the word: **(4)** it may serve as a most welcome background against which may be aptly reflected what appears to be the genuine part played by the functional load of phonemes in the Prague conception of the phonological development of language.

(5) Robert D. King tried to demonstrate, on the basis of statistical investigation made with the help of a computer, that "functional load, if it is a factor in sound change at all, is one of the least important of those we know anything about and that it is best regarded in discussion centering on the cause and direction of phonological change" (p. 831, Summary prefaced to the paper).

(6) This is, of course, very strong language, and attentive examination of the author's arguments will reveal that it is far from justified. The materials on which the author bases his analysis are the historically evidenced mergers of sounds that occurred between two periods of one and the same language (concretely, between Old and Modern Icelandic, Anglo Saxon and Middle Low German, Middle and Modern High German, and between Middle High German and certain Modern Yiddish dialects). **(7)** These mergers are confronted, as a rule, with the results of the author's statistical investigations of contexts of approximately 20,000 phonemes for each language. The investigations show, first, the global text frequencies of the concerned phonemes and, second, "the degree to which they contrast in all possible environments, where environment means, roughly speaking, one phoneme to the left and right" (p. 836). **(8)** These data enable the author to establish the "functional load indices", which as a rule range between 0,500 and 5,000, "though both smaller and larger functional loads are not infrequently obtained" (ibid.).

Further, King differentiates, in a certainly useful way, three possible interpretations of the supposed connection between the functional load and the phonological development of language. The first interpretation, which he calls "the weak point hypothesis", assumes that "if all else is equal, sound change is more likely to start within oppositions bearing low functional loads than within oppositions bearing high functional loads..." (pp. 834 to 835). The second interpretation, termed by King "the least resistance hypothesis", assumes that "if all else is equal, and if... there is a tendency for a phoneme x to merge with either of the two phonemes y or z, then that merger will occur for which the functional load of the merged opposition is smaller..." (p. 835). **(9)** To these two hypotheses, specifying Martinet's conception of functionally viewed process of sound change, King adds another one, which he calls "the frequency hypothesis": it states that if a phonological opposition of x and y "is destroyed by merger, then that phoneme will disappear in the merger for which the relative frequency of occurrence is smaller" (p. 835).

On the basis of the above differentiation, King tests the examined instances of mergers found in the development of the above-enumerated Germanic languages and comes to the conclusion that the "performance of the functional load hypothesis" is such that the instances supporting it are less numerous than those which reject it:

	Supported	Rejected
Weak point hypothesis	8	13
Least resistance hypothesis	4	5
Frequency hypothesis	7	6

King then summarizes his conclusion as follows: "Any hypothesis which predicts less than half the facts is not much use as an hypothesis, and the functional load hypotheses stated here seem to be precisely of that sort."

Our own evaluation of King's conclusion must, first of all, denote as an undoubtedly positive contribution to the problem that he has made a serious attempt to concretize, by statistical counts, the somewhat vague estimates of some functional loads of phonemes being "high", others "low". **(10)** There might be some doubt, perhaps, whether the author's conception of "phonic environment", amounting to "one phoneme to the left and right" should not have been stated in finer terms. **(11)** But in principle the author's effort is certainly praiseworthy, and the results obtained by him in this field must be appreciated as a step in the right direction. On the other hand, however, even a casual look at King's arguments drawn from the obtained numerical results is apt to reveal a number of weak points which considerably invalidate the strength of his general conclusion on the explanatory power of the functional load which, as already noted, he believes to be negligible.

(12) The most essential of such weak points have been, even if dimly, foreseen by the author himself when, in his "Final Considerations" (p. 848) he anticipates objection that his study "suffers from a narrow-minded concept of relationship between sound change and the maintenance of communication". (13) In principle, King is ready to admit that "language has ... manifold devices for carrying on its business of communication, and the information value of phonological oppositions is one of these devices, perhaps not even a very important one" and that "distinctiveness lost at the phonological level might be assumed without interruption of communication by higher level markers in morphology and syntax".

(14) This, of course, amounts to emphasizing the well-known fact that mutual communication is based on entities of all levels of language, syntactic as well as lexical,

morphemic as well as phonic, none of which can be isolated from the rest. **(15)** It is of course true – and hardly anybody will deny this – that the entities of higher language levels are much more closely linked to the extra lingual reality to be communicated than the entities of this lowest, phonic level. But neither will there be any doubt that the entities of this lowest, basic level (phonemes, distinctive units), functioning as diacritics of the higher level entities, are, exactly on account of their diacritic function, no less essential for the process of communication, despite their lack of close, direct ties with the communicated reality.

(16) Here it must be pointed out that the thesis of the multi-level organization of language and, which is just as important, of the mutual interrelations obtaining between its individual levels, has always been part and parcel of the Prague structuralist and functionalist conception of language. In his last word on the theory of language, the well-known *Grundzüge der Philologie*, Trubetzkoy declares expressly: " La langue consistant en régles ou normes, elle est, par l'opposition á l'acte de parole, un systéme, ou, pour mieux dire, un ensemble de plusieurs systémes partiels. Les catégories grammaticales forment un systéme grammatical; les catégories sémantiques constituent divers systémes sémantiques. Tous ces systémes s'équilibrent si bien que toutes leurs parties se tiennent entre elles, se complétent les unes les autres, et sont en rapports réciproques" (p. 3). – (17) To this quotation may be added another one, originating from V. Mathesius who – as early as 1929 – stressed the fact that language constitutes a complex of inseparable facts (we translate the original Czech text into English): **(18)** "The phonological system cannot be precisely and unreservedly separated from other aspects of language … here, too, language present itself as a complex of inseparable, mutually interdependent facts which cannot be separated into dependent categories even by the most vigorous linguistic analysis".

The above statements by Trubetzkoy and Mathesius, even if taken by themselves, would amply suffice to show that it would be most unjust to suppose that the Prague scholars have ever regarded the functional load of phonemes as a factor having a decisive, or even exclusive, importance for the phonological development of language. But there is also direct evidence that his has not been so. **(19)** Even R. Jakobson himself as is rightly recorded by King, does not say more on this issue than that small frequency and low functional load of a phonological opposition naturally favours its loss. But one should not overlook that in the very same sentences Jakobson gives an earnest warning that "it would be dangerous simplification to overestimate the part played in the development of language by the statistical factor" (ibid.). On top of that, even Martinet, who certainly attributes greater importance to functional load than did the pre-war Prague group, has been by no means ready to overlook its limitations. **(20)** Faced, e.g., with the survival of ModE /ž/-phoneme despite its very low frequency and functional load (especially if these are compared with those of its partner phoneme /š/), he accounts for its relatively firm position in the system by it participation in the correlation of voice, i.e. to a systemic factor. In other words, Martinet, too, admits the necessity of supplementing facts of the quantitative order by those of a qualitative order in accounting for the processes of phonological development.

(21) In a paper of our own, published almost twelve years ago, we insisted on the necessity of acknowledging a kind of fine interplay that can be established between the quantitative and qualitative factors operating in the development of the phonological system of language. We ascertained that, e.g., the progressive elimination of the phoneme /h/ in the course of the history of English had been due not only to its

decreasing functional load but also to its increasing systemic isolation in the English phonological system, in other words, to a fact of qualitative as well as quantitative order. **(22)** This argument, incidentally, was also presented in our monograph of 1964 which is registered in King's paper on p. 833 (Note 3). It does not seem, however, that he has examined the arguments contained in that monograph – otherwise he would hardly have been able to dismiss the work done by the members of the Prague Circle on the factor of the functional load as flatly as he does there. Though not issued within the time-limits of the "classical period" of the Prague group but still with contrast regard to the theoretical foundations laid down in that period, we took up that issue repeatedly, in our papers dating from 1952, 1957, 1960, and summarizingly in 1964. In these papers we demonstrated the operation of the functional load not only in the case of ModE /*h*/ but also in other cases, e.g. in those of British English /*r*/ and /*ŋ*/. We made a special point in delimiting the operation of the factor of functional load by the operation of other factors, mainly by the above-mentioned factor of the systemic integration of the phonemes concerned.

By pointing out the interplay of quantitative and qualitative factors in the phonological development of language we wanted to do justice to the complexity of this process of development which it would be absurd to reduce to the operation of one single factor only. **(23)** But it had been equally clear to us that the complexity of the phonological process cannot always be accounted for by the operation of the factors of the phonic level alone. As a matter of fact, it not infrequently happens that factors belonging to higher levels of language (mainly to the grammatical and lexical level) may intervene in the process. **(24)** This was, in principle, foreseen by Trubetzkoy and Mathesius, as is shown by their statements quoted here above. **(25)** As for the more concrete documentation, we attempted to trace the operation of some such higher level factors in the phonological development of English, contrasted with that of some Slavonic languages, in a paper of ours published as early as in 1958, and more instances of such mutual interdependence were discussed in our monograph published in 1961. **(26)** Only in passing we want to refer here to our paper dealing with the Czech phoneme /*ř*/ which is very unsatisfactorily integrated in the Czech system of consonant phonemes, but still is upheld in it thanks to the important part belonging to it in the morphological pattern of Present Day Czech language.

(27) What has been said here so far may give the reader some idea of the various factors that assert themselves in the phonological development of language and of the complex interplay in which these factors are found to participate. But even here the complexity does not end. **(28)** There is another factor that must be reckoned with, even if, for the phonic level of language, its influence may rank as secondary, being asserted there indirectly only. This factor is the external situation in which the speakers of the given language are living and communicating, in other words, the circumstances of cultural, social, and political order. **(29)** It is quite obvious that the language level directly influenced by these external factors is the lexical one; still, at times, also grammatical levels, and even the phonic level, may be affected in indirect ways, at least in some of their points. **(30)** Concrete illustrations of how this actually happens, taken again from the history of the English language, were presented in some of our earlier papers.

The result we arrived at in these papers reveal that the external factors can influence the development of the structure of language only if their influence is not contrary to the

systemic needs and wants of the influenced language. **(31)** It is fair to state that, again, this conclusion had been anticipated, almost four decades ago, by the protagonists of the Prague linguistic group, especially by R. Jakobson. As early as in 1929, speaking about the relations between the system of language and the systems of the social and geographical order, he did not hesitate to declare that "l'explication heteronome de l'évolution phonologique n'est pas en mesure de remplacer l'explication immanente, elle ne peut que la compléter" (TCLP 2, p. 96). A year later, B. Havránek was still more explicit in pointing out, in the discussion held at the International Phonological Conference in Prague, that "ce ne sont que des raisons intrinséques qui peuvent résoudre la question de savoir pourquoi certaines influences éntrangéres agissent, tandisque d'autres restent sans effect" (TCLP 4, 1931, p. 304). – **(32)** This, however should not be presented in the sense that a language system (and especially its phonic level) admits only of such external influence as acts in conformity with the needs and wants of its structure. **(33)** As we hope to have demonstrated in our above-quoted paper (Note 11), this positive formulation should rather be replaced by the negative one: a language system (and especially its phonic level) does not admit of such external influence as would be contrary to the needs and wants of its structure. In other words, the needs and wants of language exercise, so to speak, the right of control as against the impact of the external factors in the midst of which that language is functioning.

   (34) Another misunderstanding should be cleared out of the way, viz. the belief that the functionally motivated sound changes and processes must necessarily be consciously evaluated as such by the speakers of the concerned language. Also King is of the opinion that such consciousness is a necessary assumption of the "theory of therapeutic sound changes as developed especially in Prague School linguistics", and he declares that here are no empirical findings which support this assumption" (p. 850). **(35)** To this statement it could be objected that language processes need not, and mostly do not, enter the speaker's consciousness, which, however, detracts nothing from their functional importance. **(36)** Admittedly, many purposeful physiological processes have been automatized to such a degree as to be rendered unconscious (see, e.g., such everyday acts like walking, breathing, etc.). **(37)** One becomes conscious of them only in case that some obstacle hinders the smooth functioning of such processes – as, e.g., when walking is rendered difficult by a fir of rheumatism, breathing by influenza, and the like. Similarly, one becomes conscious of the purposeful process of using one's language only when faced with an obstacle which makes the satisfying of one's communicative needs difficult or impossible. For higher language levels this is a matter of everyday experience – all of us can find ourselves in the situations in which we do not find in the language a word or a phrase adequate to the idea we want to express. Even in the phonic level the matter may not be so obvious, one can assume that the difference is only a matter of degree, and is due to the above-noted fact that phonemes as such are not signs directly connected with extra-lingual reality but constitute only the diacritical marks of such signs. **(38)** Even so, conscious or unconscious, the items of the phonic level must, in principle, be purposefully arranged (**(39)** though, of course, as I any open system, some percentage or irregularities must be allowed for). **(40)** With the relatively very small number of phonemes and with the immensity of the task to be performed by phonemic combinations, some necessary pre-requisites of their functioning must be provided for: first, the clear mutual differentiation of the phonemes constituting the level resulting in some kind of systemic symmetry), and second, the prevention of instances of too disproportionate burdening of phonemes. Still, the needs

of the phonic level being always coordinated with those of the higher levels, it may happen that the needs of the latter, being more closely linked up with extra-lingual reality, will prevail over the former.

(41) All that has been said here so far clearly shows the complexity of the process off language development, and of the multiplicity of the factors asserting themselves in the phonological development of language. Under the circumstances, it would be most futile to isolate one of those factors and assert that it is fully responsible for all that development. And thus one cannot reasonably expect the factor of the functional load of phonemes to account for all phonemic mergers of a given period. **(42)** But the structural importance of this factor is by no means invalidated by this: indeed, if it can account for some 44 per cent of such mergers (this happens to be the percentage resulting from King's summarizing table on p. 848 of his paper), this must be evaluated as a relatively high figure giving valuable evidence of the hardly unimportant part the factor of functional load is playing in the process of the phonological development of language.

(43) One is thus led to the conclusion that Robert D. King's paper, if critically analysed, yields additional evidence of the essential soundness of the conception of language as a multi-level, open and dynamic system, as it has been worked out by members of the Prague linguistic group, among whom the two founders of the Prague studies of the English language, Vilém Mathesius and Bohumil Trnka, have played such a prominent part.

NEVILLE, Anne. *The Role of Unestablished Referent in the Conversation of Communicatively Impaired Children*. 1992. University of Queensland. Available from WWW: <http://www.geocities.com/neville_nwalbion/mscthesis/content.html>.

THE PARAMETERS OF PRAGMATICS

1.1 INTRODUCTION: THE CLINICAL NEED FOR A DEFINITION OF PRAGMATICS

(1) Over the past two decades the field of Speech and Language Pathology has undergone a shift in perspective so radical that it has been described as the "pragmatic revolution" (Conti-Ramsden & Gunn, 1986, p. 339; Myers 1989, p. 186). The progression has been away from a view of language as a formal and context-independent system towards a far broader framework derived from a functional contextual model (Friel-Patti & Conti-Ramsden, 1984; Hickmann, 1986.) This model gives priority to the effective use of language in context. **(2)** Areas in which its impact has been especially marked are those of language acquisition and developmental language impairment.

(3) The limitations of a view of language restricted to context-independent systems is illustrated clinically by the client who "has a relatively good command of grammatical and lexical patterns of language but who is unable to use these structures appropriately in speech situations and who does not interact naturally with others" (Crystal, 1985a, p. 10). The correct use of the formal systems of syntax and semantics does not of itself ensure that communication will be appropriate and effective. **(4)** Such effectiveness is dependent on the relevance of what is said to the situational, the social and the linguistic context.

(5) While pragmatics can therefore be described as the appropriate use of language in context, this description is too imprecise to provide a framework for principled assessment and remediation. **(6)** "The diversity of possible definitions and lack of clear boundaries" in the field has been discussed by Levinson in a major work on pragmatics (Levinson, 1983, p. 5). The problem of determining boundaries in relation to other aspects of language and communication has been a recurring one in attempts to delineate the parameters of pragmatics for clinical use. **(7)** The problem is of pressing practical concern since in recent years speech and language therapists have increasingly been called upon to work with people who have adequate formal language skills, but whose verbal communication is, in varying degrees, inappropriate.

In a recent summary of the issues involved in the assessment of pragmatic skills, McTear and Conti-Ramsden (1989) conclude that pragmatics involves the three following aspects of language use

1. the study of discourse and conversational skills.

2. the study of the relationship between pragmatics and other levels of language.

3. The study of situational determinants of the use of language.

(8) The first and third of these aspects will be discussed below in relation to the problem of determining the parameters of pragmatics. **(9)** The relationship between pragmatics and other levels of language, an aspect which McTear and Conti-Ramsden comment has been little addressed, is considered later in this chapter (1.6), following discussion of assessment procedures.

1.2 PRAGMATICS IN RELATION TO DISCOURSE

(10) Discourse is concerned with stretches of language, especially spoken language, which go beyond the sentence level and constitute a recognisable communicative event. A conversation is one such event (Crystal, 1985b). **(11)** Since whether some aspect of communication is appropriate or inappropriate is dependent on its relevance to context, pragmatic assessment needs to take place within the framework of a whole discourse, and not within the framework of individual units, such as sentences, which have been isolated from context.

(12) Pragmatic skills are therefore concerned with discourse. However, not all discourse or conversational skills are pragmatic. Story telling, for example, is a discourse skill (McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1989) and aspects of telling a story, such as specifying topic and establishing referent, are clearly pragmatic (Zubrick & Olley, 1987). Other aspects, however, are not. These include the "ability to focus on a character and the character's motivations, goals, plans and actions" (Hedberg, 1986, p. 59) and the use of a concept of theme (Yoshinaga-Itano, 1986). To tell a story with an immature or poorly developed use of theme or of characterisation is not in itself to use language inappropriately. **(13)** Story telling skills of this kind are related to the level of sophistication of the narrative construction, rather than to any potential inappropriateness.

The assumption that all discourse level skills are pragmatic is a potential source of confusion when attempting to delineate pragmatic deficit and can lead to errors in assessment. **(14)** This can be illustrated by reference to two procedures designed to assess discourse level skills, Dialogue with Preschoolers (Blank and Franklin, 1980) and The Clinical Discourse Analysis (Damico, 1985).

Dialogue with Pre-Schoolers, a cognitively-based system of assessment, looks at the utterances of young children and their conversational partners in terms of the level of conceptualisation of the ideas conveyed, arranged on a scale of increasing abstraction. **(15)** Conceptual complexity is characterised as an "aspect of language functioning that seems essential to effective skill in discourse" (Blank & Franklin, 1980, p. 128). **(16)** Utterances are coded on a complexity scale of 1 to 4 and also in terms of appropriateness of response. **(17)** Rating on the appropriateness scale is determined by whether or not a response is "invalid, irrelevant or insufficient to meet the constraints established by the speaker/initiator's utterance" (p. 138), such responses being designated as inadequate. **(18)** The terms 'appropriate' and 'adequate' are thus used interchangably, implying that what is inadequate in terms of conceptual complexity is also inappropriate in pragmatic terms. The manual to an adaptation of Dialogue with Pre-Schoolers for use with very young children (Conti-Ramsden & Friel-Patti, 1982) makes this point explicitly when it states that adequate responses sustain the conversation whereas inadequate responses break it down (and are thus inappropriate pragmatically).

Examination of the illustrative data used in the original presentation of the system (Blank, Rose, & Berlin, 1978) shows, however, that a response can be inadequate conceptually yet at the same time be appropriate pragmatically. One illustration given is of an adult holding up a small weight next to an evenly balanced toy scale, pointing to one side and asking, "What will happen to the scale if I put another one here?" Inadequate responses include "It's red" (associated), "I got one of those at home" (irrelevant), "It will go up" (invalid) and "I don't know" (p. 36). While clearly inadequate conceptually, the last two responses are not inappropriate. They maintain topic and invite an explanatory reply from the adult. Irrelevant and associated responses do tend to be inappropriate in that they frequently fail to maintain topic or to enable the listener to follow the speaker's line of thought. **(19)** A connection can be seen here between a child's difficulty with the conceptual complexity of a topic and the impairment of pragmatic competence. However replies such as this child's, "It's red" or "I got one at home" can, given appropriate intonation and context, function to communicate something along the lines of, "I don't know the answer to that but I m willing to carry on talking about it." A response may thus be inaccurate, or even irrelevant, in terms of the logical progression of an argument and yet contribute appropriately to the conversational interaction. There are, in other words, conversationally appropriate ways of handling failure to understand.

It is also possible for a conceptually adequate response to be inappropriate pragmatically. Into this category fall responses which are accurate in content but inappropriate stylistically with regard to the social relationship between the speakers (for example those not using appropriate politeness forms). **(20)** Also included are accurate responses which violate the turn-taking rule of conciseness by being 'over-informative. This is a deficit which many observers have noted in children with language impairment, especially of the type described as autistic (Faye & Schuler, 1980; McTear, 1984) and of the type described as semantic-pragmatic Bishop & Adams, 1989).

When using this assessment procedure it is therefore misleading to regard conceptual adequacy and pragmatic appropriateness as identical.

(21) Damico's Clinical Discourse Analysis was drawn up by using transcripts of communicatively impaired children to identify those errors which were "most apt to interfere with discourse" and which were also "readily identifiable by professionals" (Damico, 1985, p. 171). **(22)** These potential errors were then organised within the framework provided by Grice's Cooperative Principle (Grice. 1975). **(23)** The Cooperative Principle is based on four maxims requiring contributions to a conversation to be informative (maxim of quantity), truthful (maxim of quality), relevant (maxim of relevance) and clear (maxim of manner). **(24)** It can, however, be queried whether these maxims, in particular the maxim of quality, provide a suitable basis for a pragmatic assessment, as opposed to an assessment of discourse. **(25)** The maxim of quality, under which the error of "message inaccuracy" is placed in Damico's Analysis, requires that contributions to a conversation should not be knowingly false or lack adequate evidence. Given the realities of human interaction, these are unconvincing criteria for the appropriate use of language in context and pose particular problems in relation to young children, whose powers of reasoning and of discriminating between fact and fantasy are immature. **(26)** That a proposition is invalid, poorly argued or a downright lie is a legitimate concern when analysing discourse but does not necessarily imply that the speaker is using language inappropriately.

(27) Pragmatic assessment is thus carried out in relation to the linguistic content of specific discourse, such as a conversation, but involves only those aspects of discourse which are concerned with appropriateness.

1.3 SITUATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF THE USE OF LANGUAGE

The use of language is appropriate or inappropriate not only in relation to the linguistic context of an interaction but also in relation to the situational context, both physical and social.

The immediate physical environment affects paralinguistic and non-verbal aspects of an interaction, such as vocal intensity and physical proximity, and verbal aspects, such as in what way it is appropriate to make reference to people and objects that are physically present.

The social situation in which an interaction takes place includes both the immediate setting (involving considerations such as the social nature of the occasion and the subject matter of the exchange) and the broader social context (involving considerations such as the relative status of the participants and the cultural norms to which they subscribe). **(28)** Such considerations influence, among many other factors, the information and attitudes which participants can assume to be shared between them, the type of topic it is appropriate to introduce, and conventions regarding such matters as eye-gaze, physical contact and the way in which requests for clarification are made.

(29) Language may therefore be used inappropriately because one or more of the partners in an interaction is uninformed about the social norms of the setting or the social role of another participant. The situation may also arise where a participant is unwilling to conform to such norms. This may be for reasons as diverse as emotional disturbance or as considered opposition to an authority system regarded as unjust. **(30)** While it may be seen as socially inappropriate, such intentional non-cooperation with the expectations of a conversational partner is problematic (although potentially informative) in terms of pragmatic analysis. **(31)** Failure to comply with what is regarded as socially acceptable behaviour is likely to affect a child's communicative intentions but these intentions may then be carried out appropriately. **(32)** Intentional insolence, for example, may be appropriately achieved from the pragmatic standpoint although seen as inappropriate socially. **(33)** For this reason it is usually stipulated that in pragmatic assessment interchanges should be used which are positive or neutral and where it can be assumed "that both partners expect to engage in cooperative discourse" (Prutting & Kirchner 1987, p. 108). **(34)** In general terms, the part played by situational determinants in any apparent pragmatic breakdown can be minimised by ensuring that the interaction used in assessment takes place between facilitative partners in a social context familiar to the participants.

While social context is thus an essential factor in pragmatic assessment social competence does not only involve pragmatic considerations. **(35)** This can be illustrated by reference to a procedure for assessing social communication. The Classroom Communication Checklist (Ripich & Spinelli. 1985a). Ripich and Spinelli take an ethnographic approach. In this approach the focus is on the nature of the interaction and by what means, (rather than with what frequency) children achieve particular communicative goals. One may also choose to take a focus of this kind in making a pragmatic analysis. **(36)** However, while a pragmatic analysis is concerned with appropriateness within the context of a discourse, the ethnography of communication is

concerned with the organisation of speech communities as determined by socio-cultural factors (Williamson, 1991).

(37) The therapist using the ethnographically based Classroom Communication Checklist is required to give the child an effectiveness rating in a number of communication areas: participation, soliciting attention, paying attention, questioning, appropriateness, descriptive ability and speech-language abilities. **(38)** Ineffectiveness, in terms of the norms of the particular classroom setting, in any of these areas is identified and examples are noted, together with specific contextual information. This information may include comment on those with whom the child is communicating: for example, "the teacher interacts appropriately but not enthusiastically" (Ripich & Spinelli, 1985a. p. 210). **(39)** Styles socially penalising to the child, such as timidity or aggressiveness, are identified and desired behaviours are then specified. Socially undesirable behaviour does not, however, necessarily involve a pragmatic breakdown. It is possible to use language appropriately in order to communicate unenthusiastically or timidly or aggressively. **(40)** The consideration of social communication is thus not limited to pragmatic skills but places communicative appropriateness within the broader context of the child s social competence.

Pragmatic competence is thus an aspect of the broader areas both of social competence and of competence in discourse.

1.4 PRAGMATIC ASSESSMENT: THE NEED FOR A THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

The difficulty of defining the boundaries of pragmatics led in the early nineteen eighties to a situation where there was a clinical demand for assessment and remediation of pragmatic impairment but an absence of the theoretical coherence necessary to provide an overview of the area. (Crystal. 1985a; McTear, 1985a). Therapists therefore lacked a framework within which to identify pragmatic difficulties and to analyse what processes within a conversation gave rise to them. (Damico, 1985). They were thus without a satisfactory basis for principled and effective therapy. **(41)** There were a number of responses to this situation which are outlined in the following discussion.

1.4.1 STANDARDISED TESTS

It is not the function of standardised tests to give a complete picture of an area of linguistic functioning nor of an individual's strengths and weaknesses within it. Furthermore, there are particular problems with the use of standardised tests in pragmatic assessment. These relate to the interactive nature of pragmatic competence and the necessity for it to be assessed within the context of an entire and naturally occurring discourse. Standardised tests rely on the elicitation within a predetermined context of a series of discrete responses and therefore "focus on restricted aspects of language which are amenable to such testing." (McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989. p. 165). **(42)** Standardised tests of pragmatic functioning (Bray & Wiig, 1987; Prinz & Werner, 1987; Shulman, 1985) are suited to checking those aspects of interaction which are amenable to "a uniform and standardised method of eliciting" (Bray & Wiig 1987, publisher's introduction). Prominent among these is the appropriate use of speech acts, or communicative intentions, such as informing, denying and requesting. **(43)** Other aspects of pragmatics, including selecting, introducing and changing topic, and using cohesive devices to establish relatedness and unity in the discourse, involve speakers in initiation and active collaboration and are therefore not well suited to elicitation in a

standardised context. **(44)** It can be argued that for a complete clinical picture to be obtained it may sometimes be necessary to elicit information about functioning on particular parameters, doing so in as naturalistic a context as possible. (Roth & Spekman 1984). **(45)** However to provide an overview of pragmatic skills what is required is the application of a comprehensive organisational framework to naturally occurring language.

1.4.2 LISTS OF CLINICALLY IDENTIFIED DIFFICULTIES

Lacking a clearly defined framework within which to view pragmatic impairment, one clinical response has been to draw up check lists either of what the compilers have found to be the most commonly occurring problems affecting the use of language among clients (Johnson Johnston & Weinrich, 1984) or of a broad range of clinically identified problems which appear to fall within the area (Haines 1985). Such lists aim to aid the therapist in identifying common difficulties and do not set out to be comprehensive or to determine what the parameters of pragmatics are.

(46) An interesting adaptation of this approach was used in a research study by Bishop and Adams (1989) in which the authors and a third judge independently scanned transcripts of conversations of a group of language impaired children and a group of controls and identified utterances they judged to be inappropriate. The aim was to discover which aspects of children's conversations led an observer to judge the child's utterances to be inappropriate. **(47)** The judgment of inappropriate was made on the basis of previous joint discussion of other transcripts and by following the general guide-line that inappropriate utterances should be associated with "a sense of oddness and disruption of the normal conversational flow" (p. 242). **(48)** An adequate inter-rater reliability was obtained and utterances marked as inappropriate were categorised. In making this categorisation Bishop and Adams identified "a wide range of semantic. syntactic and pragmatic peculiarities . .. as leading to a sense of inappropriacy" (p. 241).

1.4.3 SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC DISORDER

(49) When a number of difficulties of the kind noted in the lists discussed above are found to commonly co-occur in individual children, they can be grouped together under the heading of a syndrome or disorder. **(50)** The term semantic-pragmatic syndrome was coined by Rapin and Allen (1983: Rapin, 1987) (who were working within a predominantly medical model) in application to children who showed both "impaired comprehension of connected discourse" and "a severe impairment in the ability to encode meaning relevant to the conversational situation" (Rapin & Allen. 1983, p. 174). **(51**) This description was appropriate to a group of children who, from the early nineteen-eighties on, were increasingly being referred for therap**y. (52)** In the U.K. in particular, the term semantic-pragmatic disorder was adopted and applied both in theoretical studies (Bishop and Rosenbloom, 1987; Bishop, 1989) and in therapy (Smedley, 1989). **(53)** Its widespread use may be seen as a reflection of the theoretical difficulty of making a distinction between pragmatics and semantics, or, broadly speaking, between language use and language meaning (Karmiloff-Smith 1979; Silverstein, 1985; Van Langendonck, 1984). The characteristics noted as features of the disorder include fluent speech with adequate articulation, verbosity, verbal comprehension deficits, lack of semantic specificity, impairment in the ability to take turns and to maintain a topic in discourse and a tendency to give over-literal or tangential responses (Adams & Bishop. 1989; Rapin. 1987). **(54)** The term semantic-

pragmatic disorder has provided a focus for discussion among those working with children to whom it can be applied (Haines, 1985) but has at the same time been criticised as unhelpful (Crystal, 1985a). **(55)** The main basis of this criticism is that the characteristics listed cannot be related in any systematic way to each other or to conversational competence since they are not set within the context of any clear view of what that competence is.

1.4.4 THERAPY

(56) In the absence of an overview of pragmatic functioning within which breakdowns in communication can be analysed the therapist is in the position of identifying individual types of difficulty and planning remediation to address each of these in isolation. **(57)** An illustration of this situation is provided in a case study of D. a seven-year-old pupil in a school for language-disordered children (Jones. Smedley & Jennings 1986). D. often made inappropriate use of general semantic terms, such as the verbs 'do', 'have', 'put', 'get' and go'. For example, talking about Father Christmas D. said "and he take the barrel to do lots of presents." (p. 159). He thus showed the lack of semantic specificity listed as one of the characteristics of semantic-pragmatic disorder. **(58)** An example is given of a therapy situation set up to show D. that general semantic terms may be inappropriate.

(59) "D. was shown a picture of several boys who were either riding, walking, running, skipping (etc.) to school. The request 'show me the boy who is going to school' demonstrated to D. the inadequacy of the verb 'going' in this context, and led him to thinking of 'better' (more specific) words." (Jones. Smedley & Jennings; 1986, p. 160).

(60) D. was thus effectively enabled to grasp that the general semantic term going was not appropriate here and to develop a strategy of finding 'better' or more specific words. However, this strategy would not be appropriate in all contexts. Take the hypothetical situation where D. is telling an acquaintance about his younger sister who has just started school, and says "Now that my sister is five, she's walking to school." The acquaintance is likely to understand from this not that D's sister has just started school but that she has just started walking to school. In this context the less specific word going' is better than the more specific word 'walking and the application of a taught strategy of using greater semantic specificity would result in a breakdown in communication. **(61)** It can thus be seen that there is a need for therapy to go beyond working on individual pragmatic problems, such as the use of over-general semantic terms to an approach which locates such problems within an overall view of pragmatic competence.

1.5 AN OVERVIEW OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

1.5.1 ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

(62) A number of assessment approaches have been developed with the aim of providing an organisational framework or descriptive taxonomy, which meets "the need to determine what the pragmatic aspects of language are and how these aspects should be organised for clinical and research purposes" (Prutting & Kirchner, 1987 p. 106). **(63)** The main features of these frameworks are shown in Table 1 (Bedrosian, 1985; Donahue, 1985; McTear 1985b; McTear & Conti-Ramsden 1989; Prutting & Kirchner, 1987; Ripich & Spinelli. 1985b; Roth & Spekman, 1984). **(64)** The schemes of

Bedrosian and of Ripich and Spinelli relate to discourse but are included here because they are confined to the pragmatic aspects of discourse as discussed above.

Prutting and Kirchner discuss the properties which should characterise an effective system of classification, or protocol, of this kind. As well as being comprehensive and well-motivated by the research literature the parameters of such a protocol need to be mutually exclusive and to relate in a consistent way to each other and to pragmatic competence as a whole. Such a protocol should also enable useful evaluation to be carried out of each of its parameters in a sample of conversational speech. **(65)** A Pragmatic Protocol, intended to meet these criteria, was developed by Prutting (Prutting, 1982; Prutting & Kirchner, 1983, 1987).

TABLE 1 MAIN FEATURES OF PRAGMATIC FRAMEWORKS
Table 1 – excluded from the excerpt in this thesis

1.5.2 PRUTTING S PRAGMATIC PROTOCOL

The Pragmatic Protocol (see Appendix A) was the result of a number of years theoretical and clinical work by Prutting and Kirchner. **(66)** An earlier version (Prutting & Kirchner, 1983) was organised according to a speech act model (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). While acknowledging the importance of Speech Act theory as a paradigm from which to view pragmatics, Prutting and Kirchner (1987) found that the speech act categories utterance act, propositional act and illocutionary/ perlocutionary act were not sufficiently distinct to provide a basis for a descriptive taxonomy meeting the criteria outlined above. **(67)** Prutting subsequently constructed the scheme on which her Protocol is based and which is divided into three aspects: Verbal, Paralinguistic and Nonverbal. Prutting describes the paralinguistic aspect (covering intelligibility and prosodics) and the nonverbal aspect (covering kinesics and proxemics) as supplementing and supporting the verbal aspect. **(68)** There are also occasions when one of the parameters of these supplementary aspects, in particular gesture, may be used to replace a verbal parameter.

(69) In the other five overviews of pragmatics shown in outline in Table 1, paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects are also regarded as supplementary to verbal aspects. An exception is Bedrosian s inclusion of the nonverbal parameter of eye gaze, when used for the purpose of attention-getting, as a basic rather than a supplementary category. **(70)** Attention-getting can also be achieved by paralinguistic means, such as raising one's voice, or by verbal means, such as saying, "Listen". **(71)** Bedrosian's restriction of attention getting to eye gaze alone appears to reflect the particular problems of the intellectually disabled, for use with whom his check list is primarily intended. McTear also includes getting and directing attention in his check list but locates these in the section dealing with turn-taking. **(72)** In the Pragmatic Protocol the importance of attention getting and attention directing is no more than hinted at (this hint being contained in the indication that all non-verbal aspects should be used appropriately to regulate discourse turns). **(73)** This omission on Prutting's part may be partly explained by the fact that her Protocol is intended for use with adults and with children aged five years and older. **(74)** In contrast, McTear is mainly concerned with very young children, whose acquisition of attentional skills is of considerable relevance to their developing capacity to take part in conversations.

The various schemes outlined in Table 1 demonstrate a congruence which reflects their common basis in extensive reviews of the relevant literature (McTear & Conti-

Ramsden, 1989). Table 1 presents an overview of the parameters of pragmatics which integrates these schemes and which consists of five distinct but inter-related areas. **(75)** These can be summarised as follows:

1. Appropriate use of Speech Acts.

2. Appropriate topic management (selection, introduction, maintenance and change of topic).

3. Appropriate use of turn-taking.

4. The use of identifiable and appropriately specific lexical items and of cohesive devices which link the discourse together in a way which is comprehensible to the conversational partners.

5. Adaptation to the style and status of one's conversational partner(s).

(76) As can be seen by reference to Table 1. it is the Pragmatic Protocol which provides the organising principles applied to weld all the other schemes of pragmatic functioning into a single comprehensive framework. **(77)** One significant modification (discussed in 3.3 below) has however, been made by the current author. This is the specification that lexical items should be not only identifiable but also appropriately specific.

The framework of pragmatic functioning provided by the Pragmatic Protocol is comprehensive in its overview and clear in the definition given of each of its parameters (McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989). **(78)** In justifying the use of this Protocol as a theoretical basis it is, however, necessary to respond to criticisms which have been made of its potential practical application. **(79)** It has been queried whether the Protocol can elucidate the relationship of its parameters to each other (McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989) and whether it can be effectively used to pin-point and analyse pragmatic problems requiring therapy (Bishop & Adams, 1989; McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989). **(80)** These are crucial considerations, since a theoretical framework of this kind must be called into question if it does not give rise to valid assessment procedures for language-impaired populations and to effective remedial approaches. It can only do this if it enables one to determine what is and what is not a pragmatic deficit. **(81)** The effectiveness of the Pragmatic Protocol has to be judged on the basis of its capacity to clarify the elusive relationship between pragmatics and other aspects of language.

1.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAGMATICS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

1.6.1 PRAGMATICS AS A SET OF SKILLS.

(82) While the comprehensiveness of the Pragmatic Protocol ensures that instances of the inappropriate use of language in context can be identified and categorised, this does not in itself resolve the question raised at the beginning of this chapter of the relationship between pragmatics and other levels of language. **(83)** The difficulties associated with uncertainty about this relationship can be illustrated by reference to two

discussions of failure to specify referent adequately. **(84)** Specifying referent is listed in the fourth section of Prutting's Protocol on the parameter Specificity/Accuracy.

Johnston (1985) discusses problems with "the mechanisms of reference specification" experienced by a nine-year-old child (p. 89). This child frequently used markers of definiteness, such as pronouns and the article 'the', in contexts where it was not possible for his conversational partner to work out to what he was referring. **(85)** For example, he referred to "those Froot Loops", although Froot Loops had not previously been mentioned in the conversation and there were none present. **(86**) Two possible interpretations of the child's deficiency in reference specification are put forward. He may have misinterpreted his conversational partner's need to know in which case the deficit is one of social cognition. On the other hand he may have been "unable to discover the basic discourse categories that govern the selection of definite versus indefinite forms", in which case the problem is an example of a "true pragmatic disorder" (p. 90).

The second example occurs in a discussion by Garman (1989) of Fletcher's analysis of the low utilisation by language impaired children of lexically specific adverbials of time (seasons, festivals etc.) **(87)** Two possible explanations are proposed. **(88)** It may be that the language impaired children are limited in their ability to organise information in which case the deficit is semantic. Alternatively it may be that these children are not aware of the need to provide their conversational partners with an explicit time reference. If this is the case, the deficit is pragmatic.

The view taken in both these cases is that an instance of insufficient specificity which produces an effect of inappropriateness is not necessarily a pragmatic deficit. **(89)** The deficit is viewed as pragmatic if the skill in which the speaker is deficient is judged to be a pragmatic skill, but not if it is judged to be a skill at some other level. **(90)** Difficulty can arise in identifying what skill is involved, and also in determining into which category, or level, a given skill falls. **(91)** In the examples given in the previous two paragraphs, interpreting a conversational partner's need to know is seen by one commentator as a pragmatic skill but by the other as a skill of social cognition. Other instances of uncertainty about whether or not a skill is pragmatic are readily available. **(92)** The situation where a child's difficulty with conceptually complex subject matter may lead to a failure to maintain topic, or to a failure to make clear the speaker's line of thinking, has been discussed above (1.2). Referring to absent objects or people requires the competent use of relative clauses and tense markers, and an inappropriate reference in such a case may therefore be due to a lack of syntactic skill. **(93)** A further illustration of the problem occurs in Bishop and Adam's (1989) study of judgments of inappropriateness, which was discussed above (1.4.2). In this study Bishop and Adams identified not only pragmatic, but also semantic and syntactic peculiarities in conversation, as leading to a sense of inappropriateness.

The problem thus arises that an identifiable deficit on one of the parameters of pragmatics may apparently be not a pragmatic deficit at all, but a deficit at some other level of language.

1.6.2 THE NARROW AND BROAD VIEWS OF PRAGMATICS.

(94) There is particular difficulty in determining whether a given instance of the inappropriate use of language in context can indeed be regarded as pragmatic, if one adopts what is generally referred to as the narrow view of pragmatics (McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989; Prutting & Kirchner, 1987). This view takes pragmatics to be a distinct

component of language, with the implication that a breakdown in communication will take place either at the pragmatic level or at one of a number of other separate levels, including the phonological, the syntactic, and the semantic.

(95) The broad view of pragmatics, on the other hand, emphasises the way in which pragmatic considerations may be integrated into other levels of language so that, for example, the development and use of syntactic devices such as relative clauses may be the result of an awareness of their communicative function. Seen from this viewpoint, a breakdown in communication is pragmatic if it is the result of a speaker's failure to grasp the communicative function of a particular linguistic feature.

Seen in terms of the broad view, pragmatics does not constitute a distinct level of language but pervades language use at all levels (McTear 1985a). The broad view resembles the narrow, however, in working on the basis of a specifically pragmatic set of abilities which is distinct from abilities at other levels of language.

1.6.3 PRAGMATICS-AS-CAUSE-EFFECT.

(96) A third approach is proposed by Prutting and Kirchner and described by them as the pragmatics-as-cause-effect point of view (Prutting & Kirchner. 1987). **(97)** Pragmatics is seen in terms of the effects of the use of language on the participants in an act of communication (Crystal, 1985b). From this viewpoint any instance of inappropriateness on the Pragmatic Protocol constitutes a pragmatic deficit and any aspect of linguistic or cognitive competence may be responsible. **(98)** The existence of pragmatic skills is not denied. The approach is consistent for example with the view put forward above that maintaining topic is a pragmatic skill whereas arguing logically is not. **(99)** However maintaining topic is a pragmatic skill because, whatever the means employed, a pragmatic end is achieved. **(100)** A pragmatic act is pragmatic not because it involves the exercise of a specifically pragmatic ability nor because the speaker is motivated by specifically pragmatic considerations but because the act produces a communicative effect which is either appropriate or inappropriate. **(101)** For example, each of the semantic and syntactic peculiarities identified by Bishop and Adams (1989) as leading to a sense of inappropriateness can be located, according to the communicative effect involved, on the pragmatic parameter of Cohesion or on that of Specificity/Accuracy. **(102)** From the pragmatics-as-cause-effect standpoint there is no exclusively pragmatic set of abilities which have to be distinguished from abilities at other levels of language. As Prutting and Kirchner (1987) express it, "the concern is for the communicative effects of various linguistic and cognitive deficits on the interaction" (p. 105).

(103) Another feature of the pragmatics-as-cause-effect position is that it is compatible with an inter-personal analysis of conversation, in which a pragmatic deficit is not seen solely as a deficit in the speaker. **(104)** The fact that responsibility for breakdowns in communication is shared between speakers and listeners is perhaps more evident when studying conversations between linguistically competent adults (Goodman, 1987) than when observing those whose language is known to be impaired or immature. In discussing the Pragmatic Protocol, Prutting and Kirchner (1987) focus on the language-impaired partner alone, for example in referring to such children as "exhibiting pragmatic deficits" and in listing "appropriate behaviors", such as "the ability to be specific" (p. 118). **(105)** Nevertheless, in their discussion they emphasise that the nature of the Protocol requires that results are "evaluated relative to the contributions made by both speaker and listener" (p. 112).

The evaluation of the contribution of all participants in a conversation is not a feature of schemes which define pragmatics in terms of the abilities of the individual. **(106)** As can be seen from comparing the examples shown in Table 2, the rating on such schemes most commonly records whether given pragmatic skills are present or absent and how frequently the individual concerned uses them. **(107)** Some measure of complexity may also be applied. In contrast the pragmatics-as-cause-effect approach is concerned with the appropriateness or inappropriateness of communicative acts and has the potential to evaluate the contribution to this effect of both (or all) conversational partners.

TABLE 2 COMPARISON OF APPROACHES TO PRAGMATIC ASSESSMENT
Table 2 – excluded from the excerpt in this thesis

In viewing appropriateness in terms of communicative effect rather than in terms of the skills of an individual speaker, the pragmatics-as-cause-effect approach thus resolves two major dilemmas inherent in the other approaches discussed.

The first of these dilemmas is the uncertainty and conflict of views which may arise over whether a particular deficit is or is not pragmatic. **(108)** For example, when the approach centred on individual skills is taken, it can (as we have seen above) be difficult to determine whether a failure in 'reference specification' is a semantic deficit, a deficit in social cognition or a pragmatic deficit. **(109)** However when the cause-effect approach is taken, there is no such ambiguity. Since the communicative effect of a failure to establish referent is one of inappropriateness, the deficit is pragmatic.

Secondly the pragmatics as cause-effect approach enables a judgment of inappropriateness to be made on the basis of the joint contributions of all participants in a conversation. **(110)** Thus any communicative breakdown can be analysed on an interpersonal basis, rather than on a narrowly intrapersonal one. (McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989).

(111) The Pragmatic Protocol thus provides not only a comprehensive overview of the parameters of pragmatics but also an effective approach to the identification of pragmatic deficits, and will be used as a framework for the investigation undertaken in the current study.

1.7 BASIS FOR THE STUDY

1.7.1 THE USE OF THE PRAGMATIC PROTOCOL
(112) Prutting's Pragmatic Protocol is intended for use both clinically and in research. **(113)** The thirty parameters of the Protocol are evaluated on a 15 minute sample of spontaneous communication. **(114)** A parameter is marked as inappropriate if it is used in such a way as to interfere with communication on one or more occasions during the sample. **(115)** On the basis of this evaluation, a profile of strengths and weaknesses is drawn up, revealing a pattern of pragmatic deficits. Prutting and Kirchner draw attention to the possibility that inappropriateness on some parameters, or combinations of parameters, may be more penalizing than inappropriateness on others.

(116) In research, profiles on the Pragmatic Protocol can be used in investigating which patterns of pragmatic strength and weakness are associated with subjects in particular clinical groups, these groups being defined in terms of cognitive and linguistic abilities.

(117) Profiles are not in themselves a basis for therapy but are intended to guide the clinician to clusters of parameters which require detailed assessment. In spite of the Protocol's potential as a tool for inter-personal analysis, the guide-lines suggested for this detailed assessment concentrate on the contribution of the language-impaired partner alone. Having identified the parameters on which deficits occur in the communication sample, the therapist should then ascertain "whether this individual frequently displayed this type of behavior" (p. 114) across a variety of contexts. **(118)** This information can then be evaluated in relation to cognitive or linguistic deficits (for example word-retrieval problems) which may be relevant, and within the overall picture of pragmatic strengths and weaknesses which the individual's profile provides.

1.7.2 THE PRESENT STUDY - A DUAL APPROACH

(119) As proposed by Prutting and Kirchner, the detailed assessment of pragmatic parameters which have been judged deficient consists of gathering more extensive information about how frequently such deficits occur. However the framework of pragmatic competence provided by the Protocol can, in addition, form the basis of a detailed assessment of another kind. **(120)** Such an assessment would consist of close textual and interactional analysis of transcribed conversations in order to determine how the parameter under consideration is utilized. Analyses of this type have the advantage of revealing not only patterns of deficit but also the processes that give rise to the pragmatic effects concerned. For example, in assessment and therapy in a case such as that of D. (discussed in 1.4.4.), the factors involved in the child's inappropriate use of general semantic terms would be the subject of a detailed analysis, each instance being examined within the context of the transcribed conversation. **(121)** In addition, comparisons could be made between all those occasions in the conversation where the use of an appropriate degree of semantic specificity was required.

Close analysis of transcribed conversations also has a significant role in qualitative research. Because it traces processes at work in a conversation, such analysis can provide information about the interaction between the parameters of a pragmatic protocol and address such questions as, "Does a problem in topic maintenance affect turn-taking contingency?" (McTear & Conti-Ramsden, 1989, p. 158). **(122)** Analysis of transcriptions provides a complementary approach to that followed in statistical studies which investigate what clusters of pragmatic effects are associated with a variety of clinically identified groups. In using transcripts to make a detailed examination of conversations, one is able to take a particular pragmatic effect as a starting point, trace how it arises, and identify linguistic, cognitive and social difficulties involved in this process. **(123)** The aim of identifying which pragmatic deficits are typical of particular clinical populations is thus extended to an investigation of why this should be so.

1.7.3 SPECIFICITY/ACCURACY

Prutting and Kirchner (1987), in a study undertaken to test the utility of Prutting's Pragmatic Protocol completed the Protocol from observation of the spontaneous conversation of members of six different diagnostic groups: a group of language-disordered children aged 7 to 10 years; a group of children with articulation disorders; a group of children developing language normally and three groups of adults. **(124)** These conversations were judged on each of the thirty parameters of the Protocol as Appropriate, Inappropriate or Not Observed. **(125)** A judgment of Inappropriate was made whenever a contribution to the conversation on any given parameter detracted

from the communicative exchange and in so doing penalised the individual concerned. **(126)** Since the present study is concerned with children only, the results for Prutting and Kirchner's adult groups will not be discussed, except to note that 100% of the group who had suffered left hemisphere damage were judged inappropriate on the parameter Specificity/Accuracy.

TABLE 3. Percentage of children whose contribution to the conversation was judged Inappropriate.
Table 3 – excluded from the excerpt in this thesis

(127) Prutting and Kirchner calculated the percentage of children in the language-disordered group whose contributions to the conversation were judged inappropriate on each of the thirty parameters of the Protocol and drew up the ranking shown in Table 3. The findings for this group were in contrast to those relating to the group of children with normally developing language and to the group with articulation disorders. **(128)** In both these groups the contributions of fewer than 5% of the children were judged inappropriate on the parameter of Specificity/ Accuracy or on that of Cohesion. **(129)** The parameters of Specificity/ Accuracy and of Cohesion are grouped together by Prutting and Kirchner (Table 1) and are closely related (2.3.1 below).
(130) Deficit on the parameter Specificity/Accuracy was thus found by Prutting and Kirchner (1987) to be more prevalent among the language impaired children than deficit on any other pragmatic parameter. Specificity/Accuracy comes under the fourth of the five areas of pragmatic competence shown in Table 1. **(131)** Prutting and Kirchner entitle this area: Lexical Selection/Use Across Speech Acts and it has been described above (1.5.2.) as covering: "The use of identifiable and appropriately specific lexical items and of cohesive devices which link the discourse together in a way which is comprehensible to the conversational partner(s)". The parameter Specificity/Accuracy relates to the first part of this description which concerns the use of a referring expression to establish referent. **(132)** The concept of the establishment of referent as one of the parameters of pragmatics was introduced in 1.6 and is examined in detail in Chapter 2.
(133) The selection of the children in the language-disordered group investigated by Prutting and Kirchner (1987) was made on a general diagnostic classification. The children performed at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a minimum of two standardised tests in one or more of the following areas: morphology, syntax, and semantics. **(134)** No distinction was made between those with verbal comprehension difficulties and those without. While the establishment of referent was clearly an area of difficulty for a higher percentage of these children than any other pragmatic parameter, there was a large range of variability within the group. **(135)** Prutting and Kirchner suggest that if the group had been divided into subgroups, with a number of different clinical profiles, each might have been found to be associated with a distinct pattern of pragmatic deficit. There is thus a need for further investigations along these lines, involving identified subgroups of language-disordered children.
The small scale pilot study reported in this thesis looks at the occurrence of unestablished referent in the conversations of a clinically identified subgroup of language impaired children. **(136)** These children had been described on referral for therapy as inappropriate in their conversational interaction, and scored at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a standardised test of verbal comprehension. In

keeping with the dual approach advocated above the study looks both at the frequency with which unestablished referent occurs and at how it arises within the children's conversations.

(137) The aims of the study will be presented at the end of Chapter 2, following a detailed examination of the pragmatic parameter which it investigates the establishment of referent.