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*“Using Passive Voice Constructions in the English Language”***

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INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Uzbekistan has focused its effort on different life areas since 1991, and the prosperous results can be seen in the economy, finance, social life, culture and indeed education of Uzbekistan.

Nowadays learning English is one of the major tasks of developing of the international relationship in our country. We know that most of information we get from listening and reading. They are also main parts of communicative competence. The president I.A. Karimov wrote in his work “High spirituality undefeated power” scientific research and investigations which we get for many years show that the human get 70 % of information till 5 years, which they take all information during their life¹.

Having adopted the independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan entrusted the commitment of teaching foreign languages to scientist – methodologists. In 1997 April 29-30, on IX session of Oliy Majlis the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. A. Karimov made a speech about National program of preparing professionals and further coming reform of education system². In his approach I. A. Karimov emphasized: “Presently, learning foreign languages is given great consideration. Doubtless, it requires thorough effort. Currently, when our country with big enthusiasm is striving to promote its position to world standards, for our nation, building its future internationally cooperating with foreign partners, it is not so time consuming to imagine the importance and sense of learning foreign language”³.

Focusing on education system, especially learning foreign languages, puts many requirements on language teaching. As our president I. A. Karimov stressed on: “In order to absorb the depth of language we must excel the teaching materials and resources based on state national standards. Only then the youth of our country

¹ Каримов И.А. Юксак маънавият енгилмас куч. 2008. 129 б. / author’s translation.

² Turikov V., Shagulyamov R. Nezavisimaya Respublika Uzbekistan. T.: Uzbekistan. 1999, page 153.

³ Karimov I. A.. Barkamol avlod orzusi. T.: Uzbekistan. 1999, page 14

will be able directly to compete in all life spheres”⁴.

It should be mentioned that being fluent in spoken and written English is one of the obligations and priorities of today's youth and also actual tasks listed in National program of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Moreover, it is of great essence to work out the full Grammar of English revealing some of stylistic problems of it. Solution to stylistic problems often appear in English Grammar and sentences can be seen in implementation of such research papers under related topics. In Grammar classes students usually face difficulties by following mostly the grammar and style usage.

The topicality of the investigation is explained by the deep interest in voice category of English grammar when students hesitatingly pause about usage. The use of correct English Grammar is really of vital importance as English language is the key language to other countries via which we communicate. Also, little mistake in it may cause great misunderstandings between people and nations.

The aim of the work is to study the use of passive voice constructions of the English language theoretically and practically.

In order to achieve this aim it is necessary to find solution to the following **tasks**:

- to have clear idea and characterize tense, verb and voice in English;
- to synthesize their backgrounds and derived forms;
- to analyze the passivism and its usage in sentences;
- to study and review relevant literature on the problem of passive voice constructions and determine theoretical principles of using them in speech.
- to analyze practical usage examples of passive voice constructions.

The subject of the work is to learn the variety of theoretical problems in detailed examples, full overview of meaning and usage.

The object of the scientific research is to give broad explanation of

⁴ I. A. Karimov. Barkamol avlod orzusi. T.: Uzbekistan. 1999, page 8

grammatical problems in English, their types, usage and give instructions how to avoid them practically.

The novelty of the qualification paper is a compiled study of tense and voice in English Grammar, its formation, types, and usage.

Scientific scrutiny of the research. The research paper is based on the works presented by scientists as N. Chomsky, A. Iriskulov, K. Uchiyama, M. Yamashito, V.A. Horin and etc.

The theoretical and practical value of this work involves the idea that the supplied material on theoretical grammar in English can be applied for teaching as a theoretical and practical part of English Grammar at Secondary and Higher educational establishments where English is taught as a second language and produce English philologists. The source information for this research work had been carefully studied and investigated before it was applied to the given work.

The methods of research: comparative method, analysis of grammar and structure patterns in often met situations, linguistically analysis;

The structure of the qualification paper consists of introduction, two chapters, Conclusion, and the list of used literature.

CHAPTER 1. Theoretical Part. The Category of Voice in the English Language.

1.1 Tense, Verb, Voice: Definitions in Linguistics

According to The Cambridge Guide to English Usage “The verb is the prime mover of the clause, and the item that makes something happen. Verbs may be classified in three ways, in terms of their meaning, their grammatical roles and their grammatical form.”⁵

Many verbs are dynamic and express events. They may be physical events such as *push, pull, rise, fall*, which can be observed by anyone; or the verbal (speech) events referred to in verbs of communicating such as *call, exclaim, speak, shout*. Other verbs express internal, mental events, such as *decide, hope, remember, think*. Another group, sometimes called "stative" verbs, expresses states of being, for example, *involve, mean, seem*. With these semantic differences go different grammatical constructions. Event- oriented verbs may be *transitive* or *intransitive*, whereas stative verbs are typically *copular* (see under transitive and copular verbs)⁶.

The verbs discussed so far are ones which would be the *main verb* within a *verb phrase* (in the strictest sense of the term: see verb phrase section 1). Other names for the *main verb* are *lexical verb* or *full verb*. The *main verb* may be prefaced by *auxiliary* or *modal verbs* such as *be, have, do* or *can, must, should*, as in *am calling / can call* (see further under auxiliary verbs and modality). When coupled with *auxiliaries/modals* they are *nonfinite* rather than *finite* (see finite verbs). They may be *active* or *passive*, according to whether their subject carries out the activity of the

⁵ Peters P. The Cambridge Guide to English Usage. Cambridge Univ. Press. 2004. p 123.

⁶ Каушанская В.Л., Ковнер Р.Л. Грамматика английского языка. – Ленинград, 1963. – 322 с.

verb phrase or not (see further under voice). Some verbs have strong links with a following particle (see further under phrasal verbs)⁷.

Most verbs vary in form according to tense and/or aspect, adding particular inflections (*called, calling*), or changing their appearance in other ways (*felt/feeling, stood/standing*). Verbs which mark their past tense and past participle with *-ed* are historically *regular verbs*, though the distinction between *regular* and *irregular* is not straightforward in modern English. See under irregular verbs and principal parts.

Verbs in the English language are a part of speech and typically describe an action, an event, or a state.

While English has many irregular verbs (see a list), for the regular ones the conjugation rules are quite straightforward. Being partially analytic, English regular verbs are not strongly inflected; all tenses, aspects and moods except the simple present and the simple past are periphrastic, formed with auxiliary verbs and modals⁸.

A regular English verb has only one principal part, from which all the forms of the verb can be derived. This is the bare form, and is shown in dictionaries. All other forms of a regular verb can be derived straightforwardly from this, for a total of four forms. For example, the bare form "exist" produces the forms *exist*, *exists* (third person singular present), *existed* (past tense (preterite) and past participle), *existing* (present participle). Each of these can be used in a variety of grammatical contexts⁹.

Another class of verbs, strong verbs, have three principal parts. For example:

⁷ Каушанская В.Л., Ковнер Р.Л. Грамматика английского языка. – Ленинград, 1963. – 322 с.

⁸ Eastwood John. Oxford Guide to English Grammar. – Oxford Univ. Press. 1994. – 453 p.

⁹ Dixon R.M.W. Semantic Approach to English Grammar. – Oxford Univ. Press. 2005. – 562 p.

Part	Example
1 infinitive	<i>write</i>
2 preterite	<i>wrote</i>
3 past participle	<i>written</i>

This gives a total of five forms (*write, writes, wrote, written, writing*).

Some irregular weak verbs have two principal parts (e.g., *send* (infinitive), *sent* (preterite and past participle)). Additionally, the verbs *do*, *say*, and *have* have irregular forms in the present tense third-person singular (although the first two are only irregular in speech): *do* /du:/ becomes *does* /dʌz/; *say* /seɪ/ becomes *says* /sɛz/; *have* /hæv/ becomes *has* /hæz/)¹⁰.

The highly irregular copular verb *to be* has eight forms: *be* (infinitive), *am* (first person singular present), *is* (third person singular present), *are* (in second person singular and all persons plural, present), *being* (present participle), *was* (first and third persons singular preterite), *were* (preterite in second person singular and all persons plural), and *been* (past participle) (in addition to the archaic forms *art, wast, wert*, and *beest*), of which only one is derivable from a principal part (*being* is derived from *be*).

Bare form

The following are uses of the bare form:

- The bare form serves as the present tense for all persons and numbers other than the third person singular.
- The bare form combines with *to* to form the to-infinitive, which is one of two verbal nouns: *To write is to learn*, which can also be expressed as *writing is learning*.

¹⁰ Dixon R.M.W. *Semantic Approach to English Grammar*. – Oxford Univ. Press. 2005. – 562 p.

- The bare form, either marked with *to* or unmarked, is used as the complement of many auxiliary verbs: *I shall/will write a novel about talking beavers; I really ought to write it.*

- The bare form is used for the English imperative mood: *Write these words.*

- The bare form is used for the English subjunctive mood: *I suggested that he write a novel about talking beavers; I demand that he be there.*

Third person singular

Formation¹¹

The *third person singular* in regular verbs in English is distinguished by the suffix *-s*. In English spelling, this *-s* is added to the stem of the infinitive form: *run* → *runs*.

If the base ends in one of the sibilant sounds: /s/, /z/, /ʒ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and its spelling does not end in a silent E, the suffix is written *-es*: *buzz* → *buzzes*; *catch* → *catches*. If the base ends in a consonant plus *y*, the *y* changes to an *i* and *-es* is affixed to the end: *cry* → *cries*. Verbs ending in *o* typically add *-es*: *veto* → *veto**es*.

Regardless of spelling, the pronunciation of the third person singular ending in most dialects follows regular rules:

- pronounced /ɪz/ after sibilants
- /s/ after voiceless consonants other than sibilants.
- /z/ otherwise¹²

The third person singular present indicative in English is notable cross-linguistically for being a morphologically marked form for a semantically unmarked one. That is to say, the third person singular is usually taken to be the most basic form in a given verbal category and as such, according to markedness theory, should have the simplest of forms in

¹¹ Downing Angela. English Grammar. A University Course. – Routledge. 2006. – 640 p.

¹² Eckersley C.E. A Concise English Grammar for Foreign Students. – Longmans. 1958. – 149 p.

its paradigm. This is clearly not the case with English where the other persons exhibit the bare root and nothing more.

In Early Modern English, some dialects distinguished the third person singular with the suffix *-th*; after consonants this was written *-eth*, and some consonants were doubled when this was added: *run* → *runneth*.

Usage

- The third person singular is used exclusively in the third person form of the English simple "present tense", which often has other uses besides the simple present: *He writes airport novels about anthropomorphic rodents*.

Exception

English preserves a number of preterite-present verbs, such as *can* and *may*. These verbs lack a separate form for the third person singular: *she can*, *she may*. All surviving preterite-present verbs in modern English are auxiliary verbs. The verb *will*, although historically not a preterite-present verb, is uninflected like one when used as an auxiliary; by a process of levelling it has become regular when it is a full verb: *Whatever she wills to happen will make life annoying for everyone else*.

Preterite form¹³

The preterite form is used in all persons and numbers as the finite verb in a clause, typically to talk about the past.

- We *lit* the fire.
- You *ate* the bread.
- He *liked* to dance.

It can also be used in a dependent clause to indicate that a present-time situation is hypothetical:

- If I *knew* that, I wouldn't have to ask.

Formation of regular preterite

¹³ Huddleston Roudney. A Student's Introduction to English Grammar. – Cambridge Univ. Press. 2005. – 320 p.

In spelling, the regular preterite is formed by adding *ed* to the bare form (*play* → *played*), except that if the bare form ends in the letter *e* then only *d* is added (*like* → *liked*).

In speech, three situations are distinguished:

- If the bare form ends in /t/ or /d/, a new syllable /əd/ is added: *drift* /drɪft/ → /'drɪftəd/; *exceed* /ɪk'si:d/ → *exceeded* → /ɪk'si:dəd/.

- If the bare form ends in an unvoiced consonant sound other than /t/, the phoneme /t/ is added: *cap* /kæp/ → *capped* /kæpt/; *pass* /pæs/ → *passed* /pæst/.

- If the bare form ends in a vowel sound or a voiced consonant sound other than /d/, the phoneme /d/ is added: *buzz* /bʌz/ → *buzzed* /bʌzd/; *tango* /'tæŋɡo/ → *tangoed* /'tæŋɡoʊd/¹⁴.

1.2 Active and Passive Voice in the English Language

Languages differ greatly in their peculiarity, i. e. in the forms which they have adopted, in the peculiarities of their usages in the combinative power of words and idiomatic forms of grammar peculiar to that language and not generally found in other languages¹⁵.

From this point of view the category of voice presents a special linguistic interest. Passive constructions play an important part in the English verb-system. Modern English, especially in its later periods, has developed the use of passive formations to a very great extent.

As a grammatical category voice is the form of the verb which shows the relation between the action and its subject indicating whether the action is performed by the subject or passes on to it. Accordingly there are two voices in English: the active and the passive. The *active voice* shows

¹⁴ Huddleston Roudney. A Student's Introduction to English Grammar. – Cambridge Univ. Press. 2005. – 320 p.

¹⁵ Ильиш Б.А. Строй современного английского языка. – Ленинград, 1971. – 363 с.

that the action is performed by its subject, that the subject is the

1 2 3 4

The reporter gave *him books*

1 2 3

He was given books by the reporter

1 2 3

Books were given him by the reporter

As a matter of fact, the communication is exactly the same in the two sentences given above. They represent merely two views of the facts, one from the side of the doer, the other from the side of the thing done. Except for the word order, the form of the verb, and the preposition *by* they are the same.

It seems practical to make distinction between a) *direct* or *primary passive*, b) *indirect* or *secondary passive* and c) *tertiary* or *prepositional passive*¹⁶.

The *direct (primary) passive* is formed in most cases from transitive verbs. The subject of the passive construction generally corresponds to the direct object of the verb.

I wrote a letter. A letter was written by me.

Further examples of such formations will be found in patterns known in traditional grammar as the Nominative with the Infinitive, e. g.:

They were not allowed to stay here.

He is said to be most diligent.

The direct passive is fairly common in sentence-patterns with the anticipatory *it*, e. g.:

It was agreed that we should make such experiments in the open air.

It was arranged that the expedition should start without delay.

Syntactic structures with the direct passive have a high frequency

¹⁶ Блох М.Я. Теоретическая грамматика английского языка. – Москва, 1981. – 383 с. 176-185

value but there are certain restrictions in their use conditioned by the grammatical organisation of the sentence:

a) the passive construction is impossible, for instance, when the direct object is expressed, a reflexive pronoun or a noun with a possessive pronoun referring to the same person as the subject of the sentence, as in: *He hurt himself. Peter hurt his arm.*

b) there are no passive forms in such phrasal verbs as, for instance, *to take part, to take courage, to take flight, to take alarm, to lose heart, to take heart* and still others.

Certain phrases of this sort, however, admit of a passive construction, e. g.: *to lose sight of, to take care, to take responsibility, to pay attention* and some others, e. g.:

No responsibility is taken for the loss of personal property (hotel notice).

Attention must be paid to the results of the first experiment.

Such things should not be lost sight of.

On account of the infinite variety of lexical meanings inherent in verbs the structural relations between verbs and their objects are so flexible that to draw a rigid line of demarcation between the different types of objects is, indeed, not an easy thing to do¹⁷.

Relations between verbs and their objects vary according to the variant meanings of the verbs themselves as seen in the following instances given by H. Sweet: *kill the calf, kill the time, run a risk, run a business, answer a letter, a question, a person, pay the bill, pay six shillings, pay the cabman, fill a pipe, fill an office, etc., etc.*

A peculiarity of constitution hardly to be paralleled in other European languages will be found in sentence patterns with different kind of the indirect or secondary passive.

¹⁷ Блох М.Я. Теоретическая грамматика английского языка. – Москва, 1981. – 383 с. 176-185

There are a number of verbs which take two objects — a direct and an indirect object. The following are most frequent among them: *to allow, to ask, to award, to give, to grant, to leave, to offer, to promise, to send, to show, to teach, to tell*¹⁸.

These verbs admit of two passive constructions:

a) *A book was given to him* (the direct primary passive)

b) *He was given a book* (the indirect secondary passive)

The indirect (secondary) passive is not infrequent in verb-phrases with the verb *to give*, such as: *to give credit, to give command, to give a chance, to give a choice, to give an explanation, to give an opportunity, to give orders, to give shelter*, and the like.

He was given a good chance to argue.

She is given an opportunity to go to the south in summer.

Suppose, you are given a choice. What would you prefer?

There are many verbs in English which take a direct and an indirect object in the active construction, but they admit only one passive construction — the direct passive, e. g.: *to bring, to do, to play, to telegraph* and many others. The list could be extended. Other verbs are not reversed in particular turns of meaning. Thus, *have* has no passive when it is statal, as in: *She has gold hair*.

Next come constructions with the so-called prepositional or tertiary-passive. What in the active is the object of a preposition connected with a verb or with a verb and its object may be made the subject of a passive construction. The subject of the passive construction corresponds to the prepositional object. This "detached" preposition retains its place after the verb. Familiar examples are:

He was sent for and taken care of.

She could not bear being read to any longer.

¹⁸ Valeika Laimitus. An Introductory Course in Theoretical English Grammar. – Vilnius. 2003. – 135 p.

He is not to be relied upon.

The prepositional passive is not used with verbs which take two objects, direct and prepositional: *to explain something to somebody, to point out, to announce, to dedicate, to devote, to say, to suggest, to propose*, etc. They can have only a direct construction, e. g.: *The difficulty was explained to them. The mistake to the rule was pointed out to the man. A new-plan was suggested to us.*

The prepositional passive is not very frequent in occurrence. Its use is common with rather a limited number of verbs, such as:

1) verbs of saying: *to speak about (of, to), to talk about (of), to comment on*, etc., e. g.:

The new play was much spoken of.

2) verbs expressing scorn or contempt: *to frown at, to laugh at, to mock at, to jeer at, to sneer at*, etc., e. g.:

This idea was first jeered at.

He could not understand why his words were laughed at.

3) a miscellaneous group of verbs, such as: *to look at, to look upon (on), to look after, to look for, to approve (disapprove) of, to account for, to send for, to rely on, to think of*, e. g.:

He was sent for and taken care of.

Here is Irene to be thought of.

Observe, however, that the passive construction with the "retained" object (or "remaining accusative")¹⁹ has limits and is impossible with particular verbs or particular objects, e. g.: we can say "*something was fetched me*", but scarcely "*I was fetched something*". On the other hand, "*The trouble was spared me*" is not so natural as "*I was spared the trouble*". Possibilities are sometimes ever more limited; e. g.: we cannot say either "*I was cost nothing*" or "*Nothing was cost me.*"

¹⁹ Valeika Laimitus. An Introductory Course in Theoretical English Grammar. – Vilnius. 2003. – 135 p.

Certain verbs of removal and exclusion (such as: *banish, expel, discharge, eject, exclude, exile, forbid*) governing two objects are used chiefly in the passive, e. g.:

He was banished the realm. He was dismissed the service.

They have been expelled from the school.

The infinitive as a second object is found with a number of verbs, such as: *allow, ask, beg, beseech, bid, command, compel, declare, entreat, feel, force, encourage, incline, induce, know, lead, make, order, observe, persuade, pray, prefer, perceive, presume, pronounce, see, teach, understand, wish*, etc.

In terms of grammatical aspects of style, the usefulness of the passive merits special consideration²⁰.

The more formal referential character of passive verbal forms as compared to the active voice makes it possible to use them for stylistic purposes, as, for instance, J. Galsworthy masterly does in transferring to his pages the atmosphere of stiffness and cold restraint felt at June's treat dinner:

Dinner began in silence; the women facing one another, and the men. In silence the soup was finished — excellent, if a little thick; and fish was brought. In silence it was handed...

Bosinney ventured: "It's the first spring day".

Irene echoed softly: "Yes — the first spring day".

"Spring!" said June: "there isn't a breath of air!" No one replied.

The fish was taken away, a fine fresh sole from Dover. And Bilson brought champagne, a bottle swathed around the neck with white.

Soames said: "You'll find it dry".

Cutlets were handed, each pink frilled about the legs. They were refused by June, and silence fell.

²⁰ Valeika Laimitus. An Introductory Course in Theoretical English Grammar. – Vilnius. 2003. – 135 p.

*Soames said: "You'd better take a cutlet, June; there's nothing coming"*²¹.

But June again refused, so they were borne away. And then Irene asked: "Phil, have you heard my blackbird?"

Bosinney answered: "Rather — he's got a hunting-song. As I came round I heard him in the square".

"He's such a darling!"

"Salad, sir?" Spring chicken was removed. But Soames was speaking: "The asparagus is very poor. Bosinney, glass of Sherry with your sweet? June, you're drinking nothing!"

Passive-voice forms are bulkier than common-voice forms and where there is no real reason to use passives active verb-forms are generally preferable. But passive forms are often quite effective. Sometimes what would be the subject of an active form seems unimportant or is only vaguely identifiable.

The old house has been torn down. We've been locked out again.

Sometimes what would be the subject of an active form is important, and is included in the clause, but for valid rhetorical reasons seems better as complement of agency than as subject.

The college was founded by the local committee. He'll always be dominated by his wife.

When the passive is an infinitive or gerund its use sometimes eliminates awkward subject constructions.

Everyone likes to be liked.

We resented being treated like that.

In impersonal written styles, the passive often serves as a way of keeping the writer out of sight. Examples are numerous. Here are some of them.

²¹ Goold Brown. The Grammar of English Grammars. - EBook #11615 // <http://www.gutenberg.org>

(a) *The names of such musicians have been mentioned elsewhere.*

(b) *The importance of observations in this field has always been emphasised²².*

Passive constructions are often referred to as stilted, indirect and cold, impersonal and evasive. To give its critics their due, the passive, when in large doses, can indeed be ponderous stuffy and bulkier than the active. With all this it is used over and over by best stylists in prose open to none of the preceding objections. This is because it can be most important and useful to shift the centre of communication creating, according to circumstances, varied and effective sentences.

Students will find it helpful to remember that from the point of view of adequate translation into English passive forms may be subdivided into three groups:

a) those translated by means of active verbal forms with indefinite personal or impersonal sentences, e. g.:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>You are wanted on the phone.</i> | 1. Сизни телефонда сўрашяпти. |
| 2. <i>Were you told to wait for him?</i> | 2. Уни кутиб туришингизни айтишдими сизга? |
| 3. <i>She is regarded as the best student`.</i> | 3. Уни яхши талаба деб билишади. |
| 4. <i>We are not allowed to use a dictionary.</i> | 4. Бизга луғатдан фойдаланишга рухсат берилмаган. |
| 5. <i>He is not to be disturbed on any account.</i> | 5. Уни ҳечам безовта қилиш мумкин эмас. |
| 6. <i>I was sure the students</i> | 6. Талабаларнинг чақирилишига |

²² Goold Brown. The Grammar of English Grammars. - EBook #11615 // <http://www.gutenberg.org>

would be called in.

ишончим комил эди.

7. *Whose fault that was will never be known.*

7. Кимнинг айби эканлигини ҳеч қачон аниқлаб бўлмайди.

8. *He is said to have helped you very much.*

8. Айтишларича у сизга жуда кўп ёрдам берган экан.

b) those translated by using the verb-forms of the middle voice, e. g.:

1. *This letter can be pronounced in two ways.*

1. Бу ҳарфни икки ҳил талаффуз қилиш мумкин.

2. *This quality is not often met with.*

2. Сифат ҳар доим ҳам яхши бўлавермайди.

Cf. French: Cette qualité se rencontre rarement.

c) those translated by the corresponding passive form of the verb, e. g.:

Nothing was said. Нічого не було сказано.

d) patterns with the passive verb-forms which can be translated only by the corresponding active ones because of the lexical character of the verb and restrictions in the use of the past participle of some verbs in our mother tongue, e. g.:

Young Jolyon saw that he had been recognised, even by Winifred, who could not have been more than 15 fifteen

Ёш Жолйон уни таниб қўйишганини пайқади, ҳаттоки ҳали 15 га ҳам кирмаган Винфрид ҳам уни таниганди.

when he had forfeited the right to be considered a Forsyte. (Galsworthy) називатись Форсайтом.

To sum up in brief, the frequency value of passive constructions in

English is due to a number of reasons. Emphasis will be laid on the following:

a) There are, in fact, no means in English to avoid the indication of the doer of the action in active constructions.

In other languages there are special uses of the active without indicating the agent. Such are, for instance, indefinite-personal sentences in Uzbek with the predicate-verb in the 3rd person plural but without exact relevance to the doer of the action.

The indefinite pronoun *one* and occasionally the personal pronouns *we*, *you* and *they*, as well as the noun *people*, may be used in this meaning. But for some reason or other the use of such sentence-patterns seems to be restricted, and English instead often shows here a marked preference of passive constructions.²³

b) Variation in the use of different types of passive turns existing in English lends variety to speech. Although some of them are somewhat restricted in use, they still contribute to the frequency value of the passive in general.

²³ Evans Bergen. A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage. – Random House. New York. 1957. – 574 p.
Huddleston Roudney. A Student's Introduction to English Grammar. – Cambridge Univ. Press. 2005. – 320 p.

CHAPTER 2. Practical Part. Using Passive Voice Constructions in the English Language

2.1 Types of Passive Constructions

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter voice is a grammatical category of the verb denoting the relationship between the action expressed by the verb and the person /non-person denoted by the subject of the sentence (construction). The PV is used to show that the subject of the sentence is not the agent (doer) of the action expressed by the verb but, quite conversely, is acted upon, undergoes the action. The PV is formed by means of the auxiliary verb *be* in the required tense-aspect form and the participle II of the notional verb. The use of tenses in the passive voice is the same as in the active voice. But the future progressive tense and the perfect progressive group of tenses are very uncommon for the PV as they are phonetically difficult, and felt to be ugly. Either a corresponding AV form or a non - progressive passive forms are used instead. According to the number of elements in a passive construction, the latter can be divided into: 1) a two-member passive construction²⁴ 2) a three-member passive construction. A two-member passive construction includes the subject of the construction which is the recipient of the action, and the second member is the action itself. The child will be looked after. A three-member passive construction consists of the subject of the construction which is the recipient of the action, the action itself and the agent of the action²⁵. This kind of the passive construction is considered emphatic and is usually used to emphasize the doer of the action. There are several reasons why passive constructions are more extensively used in English than in Russian. The fact is that only one type of Passive exists in Russian in which a direct object of the active construction becomes the subject of the passive construction. And indirect

²⁴ Carstairs-McCarthy Andrew. *An Introduction to English Morphology*. — Edinburgh University Press, 2002. — 160 p.

²⁵ Хаймович Б.С., Роговская И. *Теоретическая грамматика английского языка (на английском языке)*. — Москва, 1966. — 288 с.

object cannot be used as the subject of the passive construction. Unlike in Russian, many English verbs that take two objects can feature them both in the position of the subject of the passive construction. Thus the following types of passive constructions exist: the direct passive; the indirect passive; the prepositional passive; the adverbial passive²⁶.

2.2 Using Passive Voice Constructions in English

When the person doing the action (*the secretary*) is the subject, we use an active verb. When the subject is what the action is directed at (*the report*), then we use a passive verb. We can choose to talk about *the secretary* and what he/she did, or about *the report* and what happened to it. This choice depends on what is old or new information in the context. Old information usually comes at the beginning of the sentence, and new information at the end.

In a passive sentence the agent can be the new and important information (...*by the secretary.*), or we can leave it out if it does not add any information. We say *The report was typed* because the fact that the typing is complete is more important than the identity of the typist.

The passive is often used in an official, impersonal style.

A passive verb has a form of *be* and a passive participle.

Here are two paragraphs. One is about the scientist J.J. Thomson, and the other is about the electron.

²⁶ Хаймович Б.С., Роговская И. Теоретическая грамматика английского языка (на английском языке). – Москва, 1966. – 288 с.

British physicist and mathematician and head of a group of researchers at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge. Thomson discovered the electron. He is regarded as the founder of modern physics²⁷.

A subatomic particle and one of the basic constituents of matter. The electron was discovered by J.J. Thomson. It is found in all atoms and contains the smallest known negative electrical charge²⁸.

Compare these two sentences, one from each paragraph.

Thomson discovered the electron.

The electron was discovered by Thomson.

The sentences have the same meaning, but they have different topics: they are about different things. The topic of the first sentence is *Thomson*, and the topic of the second is *the electron*. The topic is the starting-point of the sentence and is usually the subject.

When the subject is the agent (the person or thing doing the action), then the verb is active (*discovered*). When the subject is *not the* agent, then the verb is passive (*was discovered*). The choice between active and passive is really about whether the subject is the agent or not, whether we are talking about someone (*Thomson*) doing something, or about something (*the electron*) that the action is directed at. Note that *the electron* is object of the active sentence and subject of the passive sentence.

New information

A sentence contains a topic and also new information about the topic. The new information usually comes at or near the end of the sentence.

²⁷ Хаймович Б.С., Роговская И. Теоретическая грамматика английского языка (на английском языке). – Москва, 1966. – 288 с.

²⁸ Хаймович Б.С., Роговская И. Теоретическая грамматика английского языка (на английском языке). – Москва, 1966. – 288 с.

*Thomson discovered **the electron**.* The topic is *Thomson*. The new information is that he discovered the electron. *The electron* is the important piece of new information, the point of interest.

The new information can be the agent.

*The electron was discovered **by Thomson**.* Here *the electron* is the topic. The new information is that its discoverer was Thomson. *Thomson* is the point of interest, and it comes at the end of the sentence in a phrase with *by*. Here are some more examples of the agent as point of interest. *James Bond was created **by Ian Fleming**. The scheme has been put forward **by the government**. The first football World Cup was won **by Uruguay***²⁹.

In a passive sentence the point of interest can be other information such as time, place, manner or instrument.

*The electron was discovered **in 1897**. The electron was discovered **at Cambridge**. The gas should be lit **carefully**. The gas should be lit **with a match**.* Here we do not mention the agent at all.

Passive sentences without an agent

In a passive sentence we mention the agent only if it is important new information. There is often no need to mention it.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

Every day your heart pumps enough blood to fill the fuel tanks of about 400 cars. The population of the world increases by about 200,000. Nine million cigarettes are smoked. 740,000 people fly off to foreign countries.... In America 10,000 crimes are committed, and in Japan twenty million commuters cram into trains. In Russia 1.3 million telegrams are sent.... 200,000 tons of fish are caught and 7,000 tons of wool are sheared off sheep.

(from J. Reid *It Can't Be True!*)

²⁹ Teschner Richard. *Analyzing the Grammar of English*. – Georgetown Univ. Press. 2007. – 246 p.

There is no need to say that nine million cigarettes are smoked *by smokers all over the world*, or that in America 10,000 crimes are committed *by criminals*. This is already clear from the context. Here are some more examples. *A new government has been elected. The man was arrested. 'Hamlet' was written in 1601.* It is well known that 'Hamlet' was written *by Shakespeare*, so we do not need to mention it. For the same reason, we do not need to say that the man was arrested *by police* or the government elected *by the people*.

We use the verb *bear* (a child) mainly in the passive and without an agent. *Charles Dickens was born in Portsea.*

b The agent may not be relevant to the message.

A large number of Sherlock Holmes films have been made. The atom was regarded as solid until the electron was discovered in 1897. The makers of the films and the discoverer of the electron are not relevant. The sentences are about the *number* of films and the *time* of the discovery.

c Sometimes we do not know the identity of the agent.

My car was stolen.

The phrase *by a thief* would add no information. But we can use an agent if there is some information. *My car was stolen by two teenagers.*

d Sometimes we do not mention the agent because we do not want to. *Mistakes have been made.* This use of the passive without an agent is a way of not saying who is responsible. Compare the active *I/We have made mistakes*³⁰.

Empty subjects

Even when the agent is not important or not known, we do not always use the passive. Especially in informal speech, we can use *you, one, we, they, people* or *someone* as vague and 'empty' subjects. But a passive sentence is preferred in more formal English.

³⁰ Teschner Richard. Analyzing the Grammar of English. – Georgetown Univ. Press. 2007. – 246 p.

Active: ***You/One*** *can't do anything about it.*

Passive: *Nothing can be done about it.*

Active: ***We/People*** *use electricity for all kinds of purposes.*

Passive: *Electricity is used for all kinds of purposes.*

Active: *They're building some new houses.*

Passive: *Some new houses are being built.*

Typical contexts for the passive

We can use the passive in speech, but it is more common in writing, especially in the impersonal style of textbooks and reports.

a) To describe industrial and scientific processes *The ore is usually dug out of the ground. The paint is then pumped into a large tank, where it is thinned. If sulphur is heated, a number of changes can be seen.*

b) To describe historical and social processes *A new political party was formed. Thousands of new homes have been built. A lot of money is given to help the hungry.*

c) Official rules and procedures

The service is provided under a contract. This book must be returned to the library by the date above. Application should be made in writing. The active equivalent *We provide the service..., You must return this book...* is less formal and less impersonal.

Verbs which cannot be passive

a) An intransitive verb cannot be passive. These sentences have no passive equivalent.

*Something **happened**. He **slept** soundly. The cat **ran** away.* But most phrasal and prepositional verbs which have an object can be passive. •

105(3)

*We ran over a cat./The cat **was run** over.*

b) Some state verbs cannot be passive, e.g. *be, belong, exist, have* (= own), *lack, resemble, seem, suit*. These sentences have no passive equivalent. *Tom **has** a guitar. The building **seemed** empty.*

Some verbs can be either action verbs or state verbs, e.g. *measure, weigh, fit, cost*. They can be passive only when they are action verbs.

Action & active: *The decorator **measured** the wall.* Action & passive: *The wall **was measured** by the decorator.* State: *The wall **measured** three metres.*

but NOT *Three metres was measured by the wall.*

But some state verbs can be passive, e.g. *believe, intend, know, like, love, mean, need, own, understand, want*.

*The building **is owned** by an American company. Oldpostcards **are wanted** by collectors.*

Tenses and aspects in the passive

The lowest monthly death toll on French roads for 30 years was announced by the Transport Ministry for the month of August. The results were seen as a direct triumph for the new licence laws, which led to a bitter truck drivers strike in July. Some 789people died on the roads last month, 217fewer than in August last year.

(from ***Early Times***)

Cocaine worth £290 million has been seized by the FBI in a case which is being called 'the chocolate connection'. The 6,000 lb of drugs were hidden in blocks of chocolate aboard an American ship that docked in Port Newark, New Jersey, from Ecuador.

(from ***The Mail on Sunday***)

Tenses and Aspects in the Passive

1) A passive verb has a form of *be* and a passive participle. *Be* is in the same tense as the equivalent active form. The passive participle has the same form as a past participle: *announced, called, seen*.

Active: *The Ministry **announced** the figure*, (past simple) Passive: *The figure **was announced***. (past simple of *be* + passive participle)

Simple tenses (simple form of *be* + passive participle) *Large numbers of people **are killed** on the roads. The drugs **were found** by the police.*

b The perfect (perfect of *be* + passive participle) *Cocaine **has been seized** by the FBI. The drugs **had been loaded** onto the ship in Ecuador.*

c The continuous (continuous of *be* + passive participle) *The case **is being called** 'the chocolate connection'. Three men **were being questioned** by detectives last night.*

d *Will and be going to* (future of *be* + passive participle) *The drugs **will be destroyed***³¹.

*The men **are going to be charged** with importing cocaine.*

2) We form negatives and questions in the same way as in active sentences. In the negative *no?* comes after the (first) auxiliary; in questions there is inversion of subject and (first) auxiliary³².

Negative: *The drugs **were not found** by customs officers.*

*The law **hasn't been changed**. Question: Where **were** the drugs found?*

***Has** the law been changed?*

3) When we use a phrasal or prepositional verb in the passive, the adverb or preposition (e.g. *down, for*) comes after the passive participle.

*The tree was **cut down** last week. Has the doctor been **sent for**?* Note also verb + adverb + preposition, and verbal idioms with prepositions.

³¹ Teschner Richard. Analyzing the Grammar of English. – Georgetown Univ. Press. 2007. – 246 p.

³² Иванова И.П. Теоретическая грамматика современного английского языка. – Москва, 1981. – 287 с.

*Such out-of-date practices should be **done away with**. The poor child is always being **made fun of**.*

4 We can sometimes use a participle as a modifier, like an adjective: *a **broken** vase*. We can also put the participle after *be*. *The vase was broken* can express either a state or an action³³.

State: *The vase **was broken**. It lay in pieces on the floor,*

(be + complement) *The drugs **were hidden** in the ship. They were in blocks of chocolate.*

Action: *The vase **was broken** by a guest. He knocked it over.*

(passive verb) *The drugs **were hidden** (by the gang) and then loaded onto the ship.*

Modal verbs in the passive

1) We can use the passive with a modal verb (or an expression like *have to*). The pattern is modal verb + *be* + passive participle.

*Stamps **can be bought** at any post office.*

*Animals **should really be seen** in their natural habitat.*

Meals ***have to be prepared*** every day.

*Many things that **used to be done** by hand are now done by machine.*

For an adjective ending in *able/ible* meaning that something 'can be done',. *Stamps **are obtainable** at any post office.*

2) A modal verb can also go with the perfect and the passive together. The pattern is modal verb + *have been* + passive participle.

*I can't find that piece of paper. It **must have been thrown** away. The plane **might have been delayed** by the fog. This bill **ought to have been paid** weeks ago.*

³³ Иванова И.П. Теоретическая грамматика современного английского языка. – Москва, 1981. – 287 с.

The passive with **get**

1 We sometimes form the passive with *get* rather than with *be*.

*The vase **got broken** when we moved. We **get paid** monthly. It was so hot my shoulders **were getting** burnt. If you don't lock your bike, it **might get stolen**.* We use the passive with *get* mainly in informal English, and it has a more limited use than *be*. The passive with *get* expresses action and change, not a state. It often refers to something happening by accident, unexpectedly or incidentally. (Note that the payment of salaries is a small, incidental part of a company's whole activities.) We do not use *get* for a major, planned action. NOT *Wembley Stadium got built in 1923*.

In simple tenses we use the auxiliary *do* in negatives and questions. *I forgot to leave the dustbin out, so it **didn't get emptied**. How often **do** these offices **get cleaned**?*

2) We also use *get*+ passive participle in some idiomatic expressions.

*There wasn't enough time to **get washed**.* (= wash oneself)

Such expressions are: *get washed, getshaved, get (un)dressed, get changed; get engaged, get married, get divorced; get started* (= start), *get lost* (= lose one's way).

The passive with verbs of giving

The idioms *get washed/shaved/dressed/changed* are much more common than *wash myself* etc. But we can use *wash* etc in the active without an object. *There wasn't much time to wash and change.*

3 After *get* there can be an adjective in *ed*.

*I'd just **got interested** in the film when the phone rang.* (= I'd just **become interested** in the film ...) Some other adjectives used after *get* are *bored, confused, drunk, excited* and *tired*.

The passive with verbs of giving

1) In the active, *give* can have two objects.

*The nurse gives **the patient a sleepingpill*** Either of these objects can be the subject of a passive sentence. *A **sleeping pill** is given to the patient. **The patient** is given a sleeping pill.* We can use other verbs in these patterns, e.g. *send, offer, award*. (3)

2) Here are two ways in which a court case about paying damages might be reported³⁴.

MILLION POUND DAMAGES AWARDED

£1 million pound damages were awarded in the High Court in London yesterday to a cyclist who was left completely paralysed after a road accident. The damages are the highest ever paid to a road accident victim in a British court.

CYCLIST AWARDED MILLION POUNDS

A cyclist who was left completely paralysed after a road accident was awarded £1 million damages at the High Court in London yesterday. The court heard that Mr Graham Marks was hit by a car as he was cycling along the A303 near Sparhford in Somerset.

Compare these two sentences, one from each report, ***f 1 million damages** were awarded to a cyclist. A **cyclist** was awarded £1 million damages.* Both sentences are passive, but one has *£1 million damages* as its subject, and the other has *a cyclist* as its subject. The first report is about the damages, and it tells us who received them. The second is about a cyclist, and it tells us what he received.

▪ It is quite normal in English for the person receiving something to be the subject. Here are some more examples.

³⁴ Burt Angela. A to Z Correct English. – How to books LTD. 2002. – 203 p.

Carstairs-McCarthy Andrew. An Introduction to English Morphology. – Edinburgh University Press, 2002. – 160 p.

***The chairman** was handed a note. I've been offered a job. We were told all the details. **The residents** will be found new homes.*

We can use these verbs in the passive pattern:

<i>allow</i>	<i>deny</i>	<i>leave</i>	<i>promise</i>	<i>tell</i>
<i>ask</i>	<i>feed</i>	<i>lend</i>	<i>refuse</i>	<i>throw</i>
<i>award</i>	<i>find</i>	<i>offer</i>	<i>send</i>	
<i>bring</i>	<i>give</i>	<i>owe</i>	<i>sell</i>	
<i>buy</i>	<i>grant</i>	<i>pass</i>	<i>show</i>	
<i>charge</i>	<i>hand</i>	<i>pay</i>	<i>teach</i>	

The passive with verbs of reporting

There are two special patterns with verbs of reporting.

Active: ***They say** that elephants have good memories.*

Passive: ***It is said** that elephants have good memories- Elephants **are said to** have good memories.*

There is an example of each pattern in this paragraph.

STONEHENGE

***It is now thought** that Stonehenge - the great stone circle - dates from about 1900BC. Until recently the circle **was** popularly **believed to** be a Druid temple and a place of human sacrifice, but this is not in fact so. The stones were put up long before the Druids came to Britain.*

It + passive verb + finite clause

***It is thought** that Stonehenge dates from about 1900 BC. This pattern is often used in news reports where there is no need to mention the source of the information.*

***It was reported** that the army was crossing the frontier.*

***It has been shown** that the theory is correct.*

***It is proposed** that prices should increase next year.*

In Pattern 1 we can use these verbs:

<i>admit</i>	<i>declare</i>	<i>hope</i>	<i>propose</i>	<i>show</i>
<i>agree</i>	<i>discover</i>	<i>intend</i>	<i>prove</i>	<i>state</i>
<i>allege</i>	<i>establish</i>	<i>know</i>	<i>recommend</i>	<i>suggest</i>
<i>announce</i>	<i>estimate</i>	<i>mention</i>	<i>regret</i>	<i>suppose</i>
<i>assume</i>	<i>expect</i>	<i>notice</i>	<i>report</i>	<i>think</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>explain</i>	<i>object</i>	<i>request</i>	<i>understand</i>
<i>claim</i>	<i>fear</i>	<i>observe</i>	<i>reveal</i>	
<i>consider</i>	<i>feel</i>	<i>presume</i>	<i>say</i>	
<i>decide</i>	<i>find</i>	<i>promise</i>	<i>see</i>	

Subject + passive verb + to-infinitive

Compare these patterns.

Pattern 1: *It is thought that Stonehenge dates from about 1900 BC.*

Pattern 2: *Stonehenge is thought to date from about 1900 BC.*

Passive + to-infinitive or active participle

We can use the pattern with the subject *there*.

There is considered to be little chance of the plan succeeding.

It+ passive verb + to-infinitive

Active: *The committee agreed to support the idea.* Passive: *It was agreed to support the idea.*

We can use this pattern only with the verbs *agree*, *decide* and *propose*.

The agent with verbs of reporting

We can express the agent in all three patterns. *It was reported by **the BBC** that the army was crossing the frontier. The theory has been shown by **scientists** to be correct. It was agreed **by the committee** to support the idea*³⁵.

³⁵ Burt Angela. A to Z Correct English. – How to books LTD. 2002. – 203 p.

Carstairs-McCarthy Andrew. An Introduction to English Morphology. – Edinburgh University Press, 2002. – 160 p.

Passive + to-infinitive or active participle

Some patterns with a verb + object + infinitive/active participle have a passive equivalent.

Infinitive

Active: *Police advise drivers to use an alternative route.* Passive: *Drivers **are advised to use** an alternative route.*

We can use this passive pattern with verbs like *tell, ask, persuade, warn, advise*; and verbs like *force, allow*.

We can also use a finite clause after the passive verb.

Drivers are advised ***that an alternative route should be used.***

Active: *The terrorists made the hostages lie down.* Passive: *The hostages **were made to lie down.***

In the passive pattern we always use a to-infinitive (to *lie*) even if in the active there is a bare infinitive (*lie*). This happens after *make* and after verbs of perception such as *see*.

NOTE

We do not often use ***let*** in the passive. We use ***be allowed to*** instead. *The hostages were allowed to talk to each other.*

Active participle

Active: *The detective saw the woman putting the jewellery in her bag.* Passive: *The woman **was seen putting** the jewellery in her bag.* Active: *The officials kept us waiting for half an hour.* Passive: *We **were kept waiting** for half an hour.*

In this pattern we can use verbs of perception (see) and catch, find, keep, leave, lose, spend, and waste.

With a participle

With an infinitive

Active: *Someone saw him **running** away.* *Someone saw him **run** away.*

Passive: *He was seen **running** away.* *He was seen **to run** away.*

Patterns with *have* and *get*

The active: *have/get* + object + infinitive

This pattern means 'cause someone to do something'. *Have* takes a bare infinitive and *get* a to-infinitive. *I **had** the garage **service** my car. I **got** the garage **to service** my car.* This active pattern with *have* is more common in the USA than in Britain, where it is rather formal. *Ge* is informal.

The passive: *have/get* + object + passive participle

This pattern means 'cause something to be done'. *I **had** my car **serviced**. I **got** my car **serviced**.* This means that I arranged for someone, for example a garage, to service my car; I did not service it myself. We use this pattern mainly to talk about professional services to a customer. ***You should have/get the job done professionally. I had/got the machine repaired only last week. We're having/getting a new kitchen fitted. Where did you have/get your hair cut?*** Both *have* and *get* are ordinary verbs which can be continuous (*are having/are getting*) and which take the auxiliary *do* (*did... have/get...?*) *Get* is more informal than *have*.

a) Compare these two patterns with *had*.

had something done: We had a burglar alarm fitted (by a security company) some time ago.

Past perfect: ***We had fitted a burglar alarm (ourselves) some time before that.***

b) We can use *get* informally meaning 'cause oneself to do something' or 'get on with a job'. ***I must get my homework done. We finally got everything packed into suitcases.*** Here it is the subject (*I, we*) who must do the homework and who packed the suitcases.

Have meaning 'experience'

*We can use the same pattern with have meaning 'experience something', often something unpleasant. The subject is the person to whom something happens. We **had** a window **broken** in the storm. My sister **has had** some money **stolen***

Active forms with a passive meaning

Gerund

The active gerund after *need*, *want* (= need), *require* and *deserve* has a passive meaning.

*These windows need **painting**. The cupboard wants tidying out. We cannot use the passive gerund here.*

To-infinitive

We sometimes use an active to-infinitive to talk about jobs we have to do. *We've got these windows **to paint**. I had some homework **to do**.* When the subject of the sentence is the agent, the person who has to do the job, then we use the active infinitive, not the passive.

If the subject of the sentence is *not the* agent, then we use the passive infinitive. *These windows have **to be painted**. The homework was **to be done** by the next day.*

After the subject *there*, we can use either an active or a passive infinitive. *There are a lot of windows **to paint/to be painted**. There was some homework **to do/to be done**.*

We do not normally use the passive infinitive for leisure activities. ***There are lots of exciting things to do here.***

After an adjective phrase, the infinitive is usually active. *This machine isn't **safe to use**. The piano is too **heavy to move**. That box isn't **strong enough to sit on**.* If we use a phrase with *by* and the agent, then the infinitive is passive. *The piano is too heavy **to be moved by one person**.* (= The piano is too heavy **for one person to move**.)

Compare *ready* and *due*.

The meal was ready to serve/to be served at eight. The meal was due to be served at eight.

Main verbs

There are a few verbs that we can use in the active form with a passive meaning. *The singer's latest record is selling like hot cakes. This sentence doesn't read quite right. This sweater has washed OK.*

Substitutes for Passive

As in other languages passive meaning can find its expression not only in the paradigmatic forms of the verb. There are other techniques in English which can serve this purpose. There is always a selective way in the distribution of various means adapted to this purpose in each case. The peripheral elements of the passive field in Modern English are:

1) "get-passive".

2) verb-phrases with the semi-copulative verbs *become*, *stand*, *rest*, and *go*, e. g.:

I have become sunburnt.

He stands prepared to dispute it.

We rest assured.

They go armed.

3) active verb-forms with reflexive pronouns, e. g.:

*it sees itself; it manifests itself, it displays itself, etc.*¹

4) syntactic patterns of causative meaning, e. g.: *He had his photo taken. I went it done. See the letters delivered.*

5) infinitival phrases: *a thing to do = a thing to be done; the house to let, a book to read, etc.*

6) gerundial phrases:

The house needs repairing.

My shoes want mending.

7) phrasal verbs of analytical structure.

8) prepositional noun-phrases.

Phrasal-verbs of analytical structure type VN function with rather a high frequency value as stylistic alternatives of *be*-passive and *get*-passive. A few typical examples are given below. Others will readily occur to the student.

<i>to find expression</i>	<i>to be expressed</i>
<i>to find favour</i>	<i>to be favoured</i>
<i>to find reflection</i>	<i>to be reflected</i>
<i>to find support</i>	<i>to be supported</i>
<i>to find solution</i>	<i>to be solved</i>
<i>to win recognition</i>	<i>to be recognised</i>
<i>to gain respect</i>	<i>to be respected</i>
<i>to get publicity</i>	<i>to be published</i>
<i>to receive a study</i>	<i>to be studied</i>
<i>to receive criticism</i>	<i>to be criticised</i>
<i>to receive recognition</i>	<i>to be recognised</i>
<i>to receive punishment</i>	<i>to get punished</i>

In infinite cases such formations verge on the "quasi-grammatical" and serve, in fact, rather grammatical than lexical purposes. They carry grammatical information of voice distinction, moreover, this is often the dominant feature of their linguistic status revealed with sufficient evidence in regular Oppositional relations between simple and phrasal verbs and between phrasal verbs themselves. The relevance of many phrasal verbs to the voice-field is most obvious. Compare:

<i>Active</i>	<i>Passive</i>
<i>to attend</i>	<i>to pay attention</i> <i>to receive attention</i>

to help to give help to find help
to support to lend support to find support
to offend to give offence to suffer offence
to credit to give credence to find credence
to defeat to inflict a defeat to suffer a defeat
to publish to give publicity to get publicity

Phrasal verbs approach analytical forms: one of the components has lexical meaning, the second, a function verb, is semantically depleted and comes to function as a semi-copulative verb. In their linguistic status phrasal verbs remain, in fact, on the borderline between syntax and morphology. The process of converting notional words into lexico-grammatical morphemes is most active in this area.

Verbs which are part of such analytical structures differ semantically. Some of them are synonymically related in the English vocabulary irrespective of the context. Others are synonymous only in combination with certain nounal components.

to gain attention — to get attention — to receive attention; to win recognition — to get recognition — to receive recognition
— to gain recognition.

Most frequent are such verbs as: *get, obtain, receive, find, gain, win, undergo.*

We also find here such verbs as: *achieve, attain, earn, escape, demand, claim, require, suffer, endure, deserve, merit.*

In such lexico-grammatical oppositions one member (the "marked" member) signals the presence of the aspectual meaning, while the "unmarked" member may either signal "absence of marked meaning" or else be noncommittal as to its absence or presence³⁶.

³⁶ Burt Angela. A to Z Correct English. – How to books LTD. 2002. – 203 p.
 Carstairs-McCarthy Andrew. An Introduction to English Morphology. – Edinburgh University Press, 2002. – 160 p.

These two volumes comprised all the short stories he had written, and which had received or were receiving serial publication. (London)

Not being as attractive as Doyle, it was not so easy for him to win the attention of girls. (Dreiser)

She was a cold, self-centred woman, with many a thought of her own which never found expression, not even by so much as the glint of an eye. (Dreiser)

There is a close parallel to this development in other languages. Such structural elements in the English verbal system merit consideration not only in terms of their synonymic correlation with a simple verb of similar meaning. Formations of this kind are most evidently relevant to the problem of covert grammar, implicit predication, in particular.

Synonymic correlation of simple and phrasal verbs of kindred meaning merits attention in different spheres of usage. Such linguistic units are organically related and constantly aiding to and supporting each other in communication. And this is fairly universal. The choice between simple and phrasal verbs predetermines to a great extent the structural pattern of the sentence. Consituation and considerations of style in the nominal-verbal contrast will generally determine the selection of grammatical forms in the organisation of the message.

Examine the grammatical organisation of the text in the following sentences with nominality adapted to its purpose in each case:

*Everyone was out in their Slab Square, perambulating **to either get or give the eye**; perhaps in an odd moment stopping to hear a few words of admonition from Sally's Army... (Sillitoe)*

***Having given and received another hug**, he mounted the window seat, and tucking his legs under him watched her unpack. (Galsworthy)*

*This last was **the shock Jon received** coming thus on his mother. (Galsworthy)*

*The speed with which Joe worked **won Martin's admiration.***
(London)

The passive field includes also patterns with prepositional noun-phrases functioning as substitutes for ordinary passive forms of the verb.

Formations of this kind contribute significantly to the development of grammatical synonymy in sentence structure. In such syntactic patterns we find, for instance, nominal phrases with the prepositions *above, at, beyond, in, on, out of, past, under, within, without*. A few typical examples are:

beyond belief, beyond pardon, beyond (or past) cure, beyond doubt, beyond dispute, beyond expression, beyond expectation, beyond grasp, beyond help, beyond all measure, beyond praise, beyond price, beyond question, beyond repair, beyond recognition, beyond reach, beyond (above) suspicion, beyond words, in use, in print, out of use, in question, on sale, under consideration, under control, under discussion, under repair, under supervision, etc.

*...June had twice been to tea there **under the chaperonage of aunt.***
(Galsworthy)

*Outside the river, **and out of sight** he slackened his pace still more.*
(Galsworthy)

*...She remained **under the care of Doctor Thoroughgood** until August the fifteenth. (Cronin)*

*...he ran his beaming eyes over Martin's second-best suit, which was also his worst suit, and which **was ragged and past repair.** (London)*

*Unconsciously he absorbed her philosophy. **Under her guidance he was** learning to cultivate the superficial niceties and let the deeper things go hang. (Cronin)*

The passive meaning of the phrase is generally signalled by the context, the lexical meaning of the subject in particular. Compare the

following:

(a) *children in charge of a nurse* → *children are taken care of*;

(b) *a nurse in charge of children* → *a nurse takes care of children*.

Functional similarity of structures with nominal phrases and those with passive forms of the verb is quite obvious.

above criticism *too great to be criticised*

beyond repair *too old to be repaired*

without hearing *near enough to be heard*

beyond all measure *too large to be measured*

out of use *no longer used*

under his guidance *guided by him the house is under construction*
the house is being built

2.3 Clauses with Passive Voice Constructions

A system of voice is one where the terms differ as to how the syntactic functions are aligned with semantic roles. Usually there are also formal differences either associated with the verb (e.g. special inflection or auxiliaries) or associated with the NPs (e.g. special case marking or prepositions).

The general terms active and passive are based on the semantic role of the subject in clauses expressing actions:

In clauses describing some deliberate action, the subject is normally aligned with the active participant (the actor) in the active voice, but with the passive participant (the patient) in the passive voice.

In [lib], for example, *the police* refers to the actor and is subject; *her son* refers to the patient, yet is subject in [1ia].

There are also differences associated with the verb and one of the NPs: [lia] contains the passive auxiliary verb *be*, and the second NP is complement of the preposition *by*.

Many clauses, of course, do not describe actions, but they can be assigned to the active and passive categories on the basis of their syntactic likeness to clauses like those in [li]:

active voice

passive voice

i a. *Everyone saw the accident.* b. *The accident was seen by everyone.*

ii a. *His colleagues dislike him.* b. *He is disliked by his colleagues.*

Seeing and disliking aren't actions, but the syntactic relation between the members of these pairs is the same as that between [1 ib] and [lia], so they can be classified as active and passive pairs.

The voice system provides different ways of aligning the two major NPs in a clause with the syntactic functions and hence of selecting their order of appearance. Generally the subject comes first in the clause and the object or internalised complement later. A major factor influencing the choice between these orders of presentation has to do with the familiarity status of the NPs. This involves the contrast between old (familiar) and new (unfamiliar) information.

To illustrate the contrast between old and new, suppose a conversation began with one of the following sentences:

i The plumber says the dishwasher can't be repaired, *but I don't think that's true.* ii My neighbour *came over this morning; she asked me if I'd seen her cat.*

In [i] the first underlined sequence represents new information: I'm telling you this, not treating it as something you are already familiar with. The word *that* is interpreted as "the dishwasher can't be repaired", which is old - it's part of the information that has already been introduced.

But information is to be understood in a broad sense that covers entities as well as facts or propositions. *My neighbour* and *her cat* in [ii] refer to entities that haven't been mentioned previously, so they represent new information. *She* is old information, since it makes a second reference to my neighbour. *Me* and *I* count as

old because the deictic 1st and 2nd person pronouns refer to participants in the discourse who can always be regarded as familiar (if I'm telling you something, then there are at least two people in the world that we can both agree that we already know about: me and you).

In English there is a broad preference for packaging information so that SUBJECTS REPRESENT OLD INFORMATION. It's only a preference, of course: there's no question of a ban on subjects being new (that's obvious from [9], where both *the plumber* and *my neighbour* are new). But the preference is strong enough to be a clear influence on the choice between equivalent active and passive clauses. Compare these:

- i a. *A dog attacked me in the park.* b. *I was attacked by a dog in the park.*
- ii a. *I bought a tie.* b. *A tie was bought by me.*

In [i], the active example [a] has a new-information subject, and [b], the passive, has an old-information subject. The passive version will often be preferred in such pairs (though [ia] is nonetheless perfectly grammatical and acceptable).

Things are different in [ii], however. Suppose the context is one where I've just said that I've been shopping: *a tie* is new, while *I* (or *me*) is old information. Here only the active version will normally be acceptable.

Active is the default in the voice system. The use of actives is not restricted by actual constraints relating to the combination of old and new information, but the passive is. This is the generalisation that holds:

[11] In a passive clause it is not normally possible for the subject to be new when the internalised complement is old.

There is far more to the choice between active and passive clauses than there is space to discuss here. But all we want to point out is that while they normally have the same core meaning, they are not freely interchangeable. They differ in how the information is presented, and one important factor in the choice between

them concerns the status of the two major NPs as representing old or new information.

Short passives

In almost all cases the internalised complement is OPTIONAL. The passive clauses with no internalised complement are called short passives; the ones discussed so far are called long passives. Short passives are actually much more frequent than long passives. They have an important function: they enable us to LEAVE OUT something that would be obligatory in the active, namely a main clause subject. In the active versions are not grammatical, but the passive ones are fine:

active voice

- a. *Built the house in 1960.*
- a. *Damaged your car.*
- a. *Know little about the cause of ALS.*
- a. *Made mistakes.*

passive voice

- b. *The house was built in 1960.*
- b. *Your car was damaged.*
- b. *Little is known about the cause of ALS.*
- b. *Mistakes were made.*

The passive versions enable us to avoid saying anything about who built the house (we may have no idea who it was, or it may not be relevant); which employee of ours accidentally damaged your car (there are liability issues!); who exactly is ignorant (nobody knows the cause of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis); or who blundered (people don't always want to directly admit error).

Most transitive active clauses have passive counterparts, but not all. Some exceptional verbs are (either generally or in certain uses) inadmissible in passives:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. The town <u>boasts</u> a great beach. | b. A great beach is <u>boasted</u> by the town. |
| a. Max <u>lacks</u> tact. | b. Tact is <u>lacked</u> by Max. |
| a. Jill has three wonderful kids. | b. Three wonderful kids are <u>had</u> by Jill. |
| a. The jug <u>holds</u> three litres. | b. Three litres are <u>held</u> by the jug. |

Boast and *lack* occur only in active clauses. *Have* occurs in passive constructions, in its dynamic sense, as in *She was happy to find there was both*

water and gas *to be had*. *Hold* occurs in passives like *It was held in place by duct tape*, but not where it means "contain".

Passives of ditransitive actives

Ditransitive clauses have two objects. Usually the passive of a ditransitive has a subject corresponding to the first one, the indirect object. However, some speakers (BrE rather than AmE) have an alternative passive construction, illustrated by [14iib], in which the subject corresponds to the direct object of the active ditransitive, but the passive of the construction with one object and a PP complement, as in [14iiib], is widely preferred over it:

a. *The boss gave me the key.* b. *I was given the key by the boss.*

ii a. *The boss gave me the key.* b. *The key was given me by the boss.*

iii a. *The boss gave the key to me.* b. *The key was given to me by the boss.*

Prepositional passives

The subject of a passive may correspond to an object of a preposition rather than of the verb (we cite short passives in [15] for greater naturalness; the [b] examples are not exactly equivalent to the actives shown in [a]):

[15] i a. *People are looking into the matter.* b. *The matter is being looked into.*

ii a. *They took advantage of us.* b. *We were taken advantage of.*

iii a. *Someone has slept this bed.* b. *This bed has been slept on.*

In the [b] examples the doubly underlined preposition is stranded: no actual complement follows it, but an understood complement is retrievable from the subject. Clauses of this kind are called prepositional passives. Two subtypes can be distinguished.

(a) Specified preposition

In [15i-ii] the preposition is specified by the preceding verb or verbal idiom. *Look* is a prepositional verb specifying *into* as preposition for the meaning

"investigate", and the idiom *take advantage* specifies of. This type of passive has lexical restrictions on its availability: some verbs or verbal idioms permit the

prepositional passive and some don't. *Come across* (meaning "encounter") and *lose patience with* don't permit it:

[16] i a. *We came across some old letters.* b. **Some old letters were come across.* ii a. *He lost patience with the children.* b. **The children were lost patience with.*

(b) Unspecified preposition

In [15iii] the preposition is not specified; it has its ordinary meaning and in the active can be replaced by other prepositions: *Someone has slept under I on I near this bed*. Passives of this type are admissible only if the clause describes some significant EFFECT on the subject referent or some significant PROPERTY of it. Example [15iiib] is acceptable because sleeping in a bed affects it (that's why we change the sheets). And *Nauru can be driven around in about half an hour* is acceptable because if you can drive around a country in two hours, it is very small, and that's a significant property. On the other hand, **The bed was sat near* is not acceptable: sitting near the bed wouldn't affect it, and doesn't suggest any significant property of it.

Bare passives

fte-passives and gef-passives have *be* and *get* as catenative verbs with past-participial complements. Past-participial clauses also occur elsewhere with passive interpretation, and we call these bare passives because they lack the *be* and *get* markers. They can be either complements or modifiers.

(a) Bare passives as complement in complex catenatives

A few verbs that occur in the complex catenative construction - the one with an 'intervening NP' - license bare passives as complement. They include *have*, *get* (in a different use from that of gef-passives), *order*, and certain sense verbs, such as *see*:

[18] i *We had the documents checked by a lawyer.*

ii *You should gel yourself vaccinated against measles.*

iii *She ordered the records destroyed.*

iv *He saw his son knocked down by a bus.*

(b) Bare passives as modifier

As modifiers, bare passives function in the structure of NPs:

[19] i *We want [a house built after 1990].*

ii *[The complaint made by her lawyer] is being investigated.*

These are comparable to relative clauses in to-passive form: *a house which was built after 1990: the complaint that was made by her lawyer.*

Adjectival passives

Be can be followed by an adjective, and sometimes an adjective is formed from the past participle of a verb. This case must be distinguished from the to-passive. We can see this from the ambiguity of examples like [20], which can be either:

[20] a. *Her leg was broken.* b. *They were married.*

As a passive clause, [a] describes an event, as in *Her leg was broken in a hockey accident*. But it can also be a *complex-intransitive* clause - an intransitive clause containing a predicative complement, as in *Her leg was sore*. In this interpretation, [a] describes a state resulting from an earlier event: *She was using crutches because her leg was broken*. Here we say that *broken* (not the whole clause) is an *adjectival passive*.

The to-passive reading of [b] also involves an event, as in *They were married in the College Chapel*, but the complex-intransitive interpretation describes a state resulting from a prior event, as in *They were still happily married*.

The key syntactic difference between the constructions is that THE ADJECTIVAL passive can occur with complex-intransitive verbs other than BE:

[21] a. *Her leg felt broken.* b. *They stayed married.*

Here *broken* and *married* have only their adjectival, state interpretation.

2.4 Actual Realization of Passive Voice in Writing

Almost every discussion of technical or scientific style mentions the passive voice, usually as a stylistic evil to avoid. While I doubt that many of us would endorse such extreme prescriptions as "Always use the active voice," or "A writer will almost automatically improve his style when he shifts from passive to active constructions," we may be more ready to accept Freedman's position in "The Seven Sins of Technical Writing." His Sin 6 is "the *Deadly Passive*, or, better, deadening passive; it takes the life out of writing, making everything impersonal, eternal, remote and dead," but he adds that "frequently, of course, the passive is not a sin and not deadly, for there simply is no active agent and the material must be put impersonally."

The minimal distinction that must be drawn in discussing passive structures is between what is called the full passive and what is called the truncated passive. The full passive, sentence 1, includes an agentive adjunct, whereas the truncated passive, sentence 2, does not:

1. The ball was kicked by Bill.
2. The ball was kicked.

As a result, different arguments must be used to support or discourage the use of these two major kinds of passives. First, since the agent is specified in the full passive, the subject for an active voice equivalent is always available, so that sentence 1 can be replaced by sentence 3:

3. *Bill kicked the ball.*

On the other hand, if a truncated passive is to be replaced by an

active clause, a subject must be supplied for the active clause, and there is considerable variation in how straightforward or desirable this is. Second, only the full passive is longer than the equivalent active, and this means that the argument that the passive "squanders words"⁸ applies only to the full passive. The important similarity among all passives is that the recipient of the action, not the agent, is the subject. Whether or not this is a desirable feature depends on the discourse context of the passive structure under consideration, and on the nature of the statement the passive structure makes.

Although textbooks often discuss only the full passive, the full passive is rather rare in scientific writing, and in English prose generally. In four of the articles I examined, fewer than ten percent of the passives were full passives, and in the other two articles, only twenty percent and twenty-seven percent of the passives were full. In other words, more than seventy percent of the passive structures in any of these articles were truncated, and this statistic is perhaps supported by Jespersen's claim that "over 70 percent of passive sentences found in English literature contain no mention of the active subject." It may be interesting to note also that English is in fact unusual in having a full passive; most languages that have a passive voice have only the truncated passive.

What, then, are the arguments for using the full passive instead of the active? First, as Jane Walpole and others have pointed out, the full passive may allow theme to be maintained in the discourse. What this means, briefly, is that the subject of the sentence is usually interpreted as the theme, or what is being talked about. If the agent is not the theme, then the full passive allows the writer to remove it from the subject position. In part then, the choice between the full passive and the active is constrained by the discourse context of the particular clause. One fairly common use of the full passive is in the acknowledgement of the scientist responsible for a

discovery, as in sentence 4:

4. *Solions for "solution of ions" utilizing a reversible redox electrochemical system, were first proposed and studied by Elihu Root, III, at the U.S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory, now at Silver Spring, Md. 13*

Sentence 4 is the opening sentence in an article about solions; the active equivalent would have suggested that the article would be about Root. The use of the full passive to maintain theme is also shown in sentence 5:

5. *The X-ray map of Cassiopeia A we have made, together with a spectrum of the remnant plotted from the same data, suggest that the X-rays are radiated not by some central source but by hot gas produced by shock waves from the original explosion traveling through the interstellar medium.*

Clearly, *X-rays* is the theme. Furthermore, in this case the subject of the equivalent active clause is so complex linguistically that the active would be clumsy at least:

5a. *... suggest that not some central source but hot gas produced by shock waves from the original explosion traveling through the interstellar medium radiates the X-rays.*

Generally, then, we can argue that the full passive is a useful alternative to the active if the subject of the passive, and not the agent, is the theme of the discourse segment, or if the agent is so complex linguistically that its placement in subject position could lead to a perceptually more difficult sentence.

It is much more difficult to generalize about the truncated passive. Here I have limited my discussion to truncated passives used in the following four kinds of scientific discourse segments:

- A. descriptions of experimental procedures
- B. descriptions of standard procedures

C. descriptions of the state of knowledge

D. descriptions of natural processes.

These passives differ in the kind of subject their corresponding active clauses could have, if any.

The truncated passive used in descriptions of experimental procedures is almost synonymous in many people's minds with "the scientific style," and has probably received most attention in discussions of scientific style. What differentiates it most clearly from the other truncated passives I will discuss is the fact that the choice between it and an active clause is structurally unrestricted; it can easily be replaced by an active clause whose subject usually is I or we. For example, passage 6 can be replaced by passage 6a:

6. One sample was dissolved prior to thermal treatment. At 30 min. intervals, samples were withdrawn and dissolved in carrier solutions, and the temperature of the bath was increased by approx. 5°C.¹⁶

6a. We dissolved one sample prior to thermal treatment. At 30 min. intervals, we withdrew samples and dissolved them in carrier solutions, and we increased the temperature of the bath by approx. 5°C.

In practice, of course, I doubt that many writers exercise a conscious choice, for the truncated passive has become traditional. Tradition aside, however, the main argument that supports this use of the truncated passive is that it allows theme maintenance, for surely the discourse is not about the agent, but rather about the procedure. The counter-argument that the truncated passive obscures the identity of the agent is not valid in this case, it seems to me, for the agent is fully recoverable from the context. We assume that the agent is the author(s) or the author's assistants, who allow him to perform the experiment by proxy. Another counter-argument is that this use of the passive leads to monotonous prose. However, the active equivalent would probably be just as monotonous, since every

sentence would have to repeat the agent in subject position. Also, at least in scientific articles, monotony is probably not a serious fault for procedural descriptions are never read for entertainment if they are read at all the descriptions simply qualify the results.

A related but somewhat different use of the truncated passive is shown in passage 7:

7. To measure the number of gene copies the cellular DNA is broken into small pieces, the double strands are denatured (separated into single strands) by boiling, and a small amount of the radioactively labeled complementary DNA is added to the mixture under experimental conditions in which the complementary DNA can now hybridize with any DNA with which it has complementary nucleotide sequences.

Whereas passage 6 describes a particular procedure, passage describes a standard procedure; descriptions of particular procedures use the past tense, while descriptions of standard procedures use the present tense. Supplying a subject for an active equivalent is still not difficult; some choices are *one*, *a person*, or *we*. Thus, passage 7 could be replaced by passage 7a:

7a. To measure the number of gene copies, one breaks the cellular DNA into small pieces . . .

However, since the active subject has to be general or indefinite, the active clauses are no more informative than the truncated passives, and the criticism that the passive obscures the identity of the agent clearly does not apply. In fact this use of the truncated passive allows a writer to sidestep the issue of non-sexist language; as Mills and Walter have pointed out, "the active voice has in recent years become somewhat impractical because of distaste for the use of masculine pronouns . . . in situations in which the referent may be either male or female."¹⁸

A truncated passive may also be used to describe the state of

scientific knowledge. Consider, for example, passage 8:

8. *The mechanics of isolating vibration are well understood, and the necessary physical properties of the isolators have also been determined.*

The two clauses present slightly different problems. It is difficult to supply an appropriate subject for an active equivalent of the first clause, for *someone* is probably too vague and narrow, the general *we* may be confused with the particular *we* if the paper has more than one author, and *scientists* or *people* is probably too broad. It seems to me that statements like those in passage 8 presuppose an abstract agent that represents our sense of a communal repository of knowledge, and the truncated passive allows us to avoid having to define this abstraction more concretely. In the second clause, however, in addition to the abstract agent, there are also, ultimately, specific agents who determined the physical properties of the isolators. Whether or not these specific agents should be named depends in part on the purpose and audience of the discourse. Sentence 8 appears in *Scientific American* and the purpose is to provide fairly general information. If the same statement were presented for a more expert audience, documentation conventions would probably be used to identify the agents. This general category of truncated passives also differs from the previous ones in that the verbs are restricted to a rather small class.

Finally, the truncated passive is used to describe processes in which there is no direct human agency, as in sentence 9:

9. *If the pulsar is embedded in a nebula, the electrons are presumably hurled into the nebula and spiral along its own magnetic lines of force, emitting radiation over an enormous range of wave lengths.*

Often it is very difficult to supply an accurate subject for an active clause equivalent in these cases, for the only legitimate choice may be something like "natural forces." In fact, in trying to supply such a subject, one could very easily distort scientific facts.

In conclusion, then, the main fault of many prescriptions about the use of the passive voice is that they are over-generalizations. For example: "The passive voice is weak and colorless. It is also wordier than the active voice, and tends to hedge. Nevertheless, it is often used in technical writing because it promotes impersonality and restraint. . .". While there is, of course, *the* passive voice, there isn't *the* passive clause, but rather a number of different kinds of passive clauses, so that a statement that applies to one kind does not necessarily apply to the other kinds. It is necessary, first of all, to distinguish between the full passive and the truncated passive. The argument that the passive is wordy can only apply to the full passive, and the argument that the agent is obscured can only apply to some truncated passives. Within the category of truncated passive, further distinctions can be made on the basis of the kinds of subjects, if any, that could be supplied for active clause equivalents. As we have seen in this fragmentary examination, there are truncated passives for which it is impossible to supply active clause subjects, ones whose active clause subjects are abstract, ones whose active clause subjects are general and indefinite, and ones whose active clause subjects are directly recoverable from the discourse context. These different kinds of truncated passives are also used in different kinds of statements commonly found in scientific prose.

CONCLUSION

In the qualification work we came to the following conclusions:

In traditional grammar voice is the term used to cover the active and passive forms of the verb phrase, which show different relationships between the verb and its subject. In languages such as Latin there were separate sets of inflections for active and passive voices. In modern European languages, including English, the passive is expressed through a complex verb phrase.

The term active is applied by grammarians to a verb whose action is performed by its own grammatical subject. A classical illustration is the statement: I came, I saw, I conquered. In written documents, active and passive voices are vital because they express action directly as an event, rather than making it a passive process. They are the natural way to keep a narrative moving vigorously along, and many books on good style recommend their use to ensure vigorous prose.

A passive voice is one in which the subject undergoes the process or action expressed in the verb, as in:

Even in this form, the passive seems to downplay the agent, not allowing it to take up the more prominent position at the start of the sentence.

Because passive verbs play down the agent (or make it invisible), they are not the stuff of lively narrative when you want to know who is doing what. Used too often, as in some academic and official styles, they make for dreary reading. Yet for institutional communication they're all too useful. In their agentless form (without the *by* phrase) they avoid saying who is controlling and managing the situation - which is a distinct advantage if you have to break the news that terminations are on the horizon:

The employment of staff with less than six months service will be terminated. Such wording is less confrontational and perhaps more tactful.

We, the senior management, will terminate the employment of staff with less than six months service.

Apart from its use in official and corporate documents, the passive is a regular component of some kinds of science writing. Scientific reports are intended to provide objective description of experimental procedures, in terms of processes rather than people. The agentless passive allows the scientist to report that:

The call for 'simplification' and 'plain writing' should not be ignored. If there is a possibility to state something in a more accessible language without changing the meaning, the 'plainer' version is more than welcomed. However, precision and clarity should not be overruled by simplicity, especially in legal English. There is always a possibility of explanatory materials and interpreters who can translate the language to those who do not understand.

As for comparison of Uzbek and English languages the system of the passive voice in English and in Uzbek is very similar in several respects; however, on the other hand, there are a few aspects in which the use of the passive in the two languages differs. There is a substantial difference concerning the form of the passive in the respective languages, as, in addition to the periphrastic form of the passive which is used both in English and Uzbek, there is a reflexive form in Uzbek as well which does not exist in English. The main function of the passive in both languages is to express verbal action without the necessity to specify the agent that performs it. Furthermore, the passive in English is often employed as an obligatory means of the functional sentence perspective; this is usually the case in the clauses with an expressed agent that as a rhematic element occupies the final position in the sentence. In Uzbek, on the contrary, the

active voice can be utilized for this purpose. What is more, in both languages, there are stylistic differences in the use of the passive - the passive voice is more frequent in the scientific style in comparison with the literary and the colloquial style. On the whole, the frequency of the passive voice is claimed to be higher in English than in Uzbek.

Overall, the problem of passive voice is an endless topic for the linguistics and the people involved in the research problems of linguistics. Thus the given research question deserves further investigation. The passive enables to eliminate the redundant agent, thus shortening the already long sentence, and focusing the reader's attention on what is really important.

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