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석사학위논문

# A STUDY ON PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF ENGLISH

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Department of  
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CONSTRUCTIONS OF ENGLISH

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A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Department of  
English Language and Literature

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Graduate School of Chosun University

Department of  
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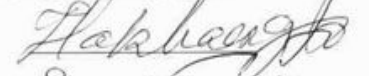
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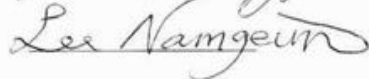
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## ABSTRACT

### A Study on Passive Constructions Of English

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Having reviewed the previous literature from the traditional, structural, transformational and cognitive approaches, we detected more or less problems or incompleteness. In this thesis, we try to study passive construction of English. The primary aim of this thesis is to categorize the syntactic analyses based on the properties of passive constructions. At the beginning, we will see what is passive, and how to analyze it. The next purpose is to list some basic properties of passive construction. The study on the English passive construction has often been thought of as the analysis of the relationship with its active counterpart in both semantic and syntactic characteristics. In this part we will examine traditional approach and transformational approach. In the following part we will examine morphology the types of passive.

Chapter one introduces the aim of studying passive construction.

Chapter two introduces general syntactic properties of passive construction.

Chapter three deals with the syntactic analysis, with regard to the semantics of the passive construction, referring to some previous works of passive construction.

Chapter four introduces seven types of passive constructions according to the examples: Transitive passive, Complex Transitive Passive, Phrasal Verb Passive, Intransitive Passive, Complex Intransitive Passive, Adjective Passive, and Get Passive.

Finally, by considering all the syntactic and semantic accounts, we try to explain the passive constructions in English as clearly as we can.

Key words : passive, passive construction, traditional approach, transformational approach, transitive passive, complex transitive passive, phrasal verb passive, intransitive passive, complex intransitive passive, adjective passive, get passive



## 국문초록

### 영어 수동 구문 연구

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이 논문은 전통, 구조, 변형, 인지적 접근에 관한 기존 논문을 살펴봄으로써 영어 수동 구문의 몇 가지 문제점이나 불완전성을 밝혀내고자 한다.

이를 위해 우선적으로, 수동이란 무엇인지 그리고 수동을 어떻게 분석하고 있는가를 살펴볼 것이다. 다음에는 수동 구문의 기본 속성에 대해 알아볼 것이다. 그동안 영어 수동 구문에 대한 연구는 통사적이고 의미론적 특징 면에서 능동구문과의 관계를 분석하는 것으로 간주되어왔다. 여기서 우리는 전통적 접근법과 변형 접근법에 초점을 둔다. 그 다음엔 수동 형태론의 유형을 살펴볼 것이다. 이 논문은 다음과 같이 5장으로 구성 된다.

1장은 수동 구문을 연구하는 목적을 소개한다.

2장은 수동 구문의 통사론적 속성을 소개한다.

3장은 수동 구문 연구를 참고하여 수동 구문의 의미론과 관련하여 통사적 분석을 다룬다.

4장은 다음과 같이 7가지 유형의 수동 구문을 소개한다. 즉 단순 타동사 수동 구문, 복합타동사 수동 구문, 구 동사 수동 구문, 단순자동사 수동 구문, 복합자동사 수동 구문, 형용사 수동 구문, Get 동사 수동 구문이다.

마지막으로 이 논문은 통사적 설명과 의미론적 설명을 고려하여 가능한 명확하게 영어 수동구문을 설명하고자 한다.

주제어: 수동, 수동 구문, 전통 접근법, 변형 접근법, 단순 타동사 수동 구문, 복합 타동사 수동 구문, 구 동사 수동 구문, 단순자동사 수동 구문, 복합자동사 수동 구문, 형용사 수동 구문, get 동사 수동 구문.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

In our traditional teaching methods with regard to the grammar of the English passive construction, students are taught the principles as follows: the construction contains the structure *be+past* participle where *be* carries the tense and agreement marking and can be replaced by *get*; there exists the active-passive correlation in that the passive can be derived from the active by inversion of the subject-object order and optional insertion of *by*-phrase, etc. However, is it that the passive construction is generated by the mechanism of verb passivization and noun phrase inversion? Will we follow it, or turn a blind eye to these findings and pursue another?

Therefore, the primary aim of the study is to make clear the interpretation of the passive construction. In order to fulfill this aim, detecting its essence is also needed. The second aim is, by following the fulfillment of the first aim, to account for various passive constructions, both the prototypical one and the non-prototypical one at the cognitive level, thus finding out what the semantic characterization of the passive construction is. Chapter 4 is an important part, where transitive verbs are categorized into seven types: transitive passive, complex transitive passive, phrasal verb passive, intransitive passive, complex intransitive passive, adjective passive, and *get* passive.

Transitive verbs have subjects or objects that receive the action. They are either active voice or passive voice. Transitive active verbs are the verbs in sentences with a direct object. Example: *John threw the ball*. The subject is the doer and the direct object is the receiver

of the action. Transitive passive verbs have the subject receiving the action with the doer in a prepositional phrase or omitted in the sentence. Examples: *The ball was thrown by John. The ball was thrown hard.* The verb in the transitive passive voice always has is, am, are, was, were, be, being, or been as an auxiliary or helping verb. In grammar, an intransitive verb does not take an object. In more technical terms, an intransitive verb has only one argument (its subject), and hence has a valency of one. For example, in English, the verbs sleep, complain and die, are intransitive. Examples: *Harry will not sleep until sunset.* (sleep has no object) *You complain too much.* (complain has no object) *He died on Saturday.* (die has no object)

Complex transitive passive: a three-place verb which combines with an object predicative or an obligatory adverbial in addition to the subject and a direct object. Examples with object predicative: *He made her happy. She found it interesting. We painted the town red.* Examples with obligatory adverbial: *She put the books in her bag. They keep the diamonds in a safe.*

Phrasal Verb Passive: A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition, a verb and an adverb, or a verb with both an adverb and a preposition, any of which are part of the syntax of the sentence, and so are a complete semantic unit. Sentences, however, may contain direct and indirect objects in addition to the phrasal verb. Phrasal verbs are particularly frequent in the English language. A phrasal verb often has a meaning which is different from the original verb. Examples: *The ocean swept away the boat. The ocean swept it away. It was swept away by the ocean. Switch off the light.*

*Switch the light off. Switch off the lights in the hallway next to the bedroom the president is sleeping in.* In grammar, an intransitive verb does not take an object. In more technical terms, an intransitive verb has only one argument (its subject), and hence has a valency of one.

For example, in English, the verbs *sleep*, *complain* and *die*, are *intransitive*. Intransitive verbs can be passivized in some languages. In English, intransitive verbs can be used in the passive voice when a prepositional phrase is included: *The houses were lived in by millions of people*. Complex intransitive passive: passive with the verb phrase of V PART PP (PFORM). Examples: *I put up with the neighbor's noise. The neighbor's noise was put up with. I do not get along with my sister: we have nothing in common*. Adjectives formed from most verbs show an "active" or a "passive" relationship with the noun they modify by adding -ing or -ed. Examples: *I was surprised at his actions. They were satisfied with his actions. Her actions much/\*very embarrassed by her actions. He looked/seemed/remained embarrassed by her actions*. The get-passive is normally fairly informal and more likely to occur in casual conversation and informal sorts of writing than in formal writing. It is often used in agentless passives. Examples: *I got phoned by a woman friend. Rosie got struck by lightning*.

## Chapter 2. Basic Properties of Passives

### 2.1 Selection Restrictions

As propounded in early Generative Grammar, selectional restrictions /rules/ features were said to relate to the syntactic frame in which a word could appear. Such selectional restrictions were contrasted with what were called 'sub categorization features'. But the latter were strictly syntactic, such as a transitive verb needs a noun phrase object (hence the deviance of \*John found sad), whereas selectional features in fact were partly based on semantic criteria, e.g. that the verb form normally needs an animate subject.

Practice in terms of language, the author experienced, English-speaking "passive meaning," or passive expression of the concept is not just limited to 'be + v-ed' structure, its expression, in the form of a flexible and heterogeneous expression, the expression of only its form or structure is divided into fixed the be + v - ed passive and active forms of the meaning of the two types of tables, there is the feeling of vague categories.

The main reason is that as a passive meaning as fixed by the significance of the relationship between logic and grammar by moving equates passive meaning, it is difficult to clearly describe the grammar of English language concepts.

In this paper, from the English meaning of the expression of a passive type and the meaning with respect to a general English meaning of the expression of the passive variety of forms, reveals

the significance of the expression of the structure of a passive type of content, teaching and learning of English in order to facilitate the process of a more comprehensive grasp, use and interpretation of the language of this important phenomenon.

## 2.2 Morpho-syntactic Changes

In a series of recent investigations of language change, a group of researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and elsewhere has described the grammatical character and time course of a number of gradual syntactic changes in various European languages.[1] In all of these cases, the languages undergoing change exhibit variation in areas of grammar where we do not find optionality in stable systems. Thus, Late Middle English, in the course of losing the verb-second constraint, manifests a variation between verb-second and simple SVO word order that is not found elsewhere among V2 languages (Kroch 1989b). Similarly, Old English and Yiddish vary between INFL-final and INFL-medial phrase structure in the course of changing from the former option to the latter categorically (Pintzuk 1991, 1993; Santorini 1989, 1992, 1993). Ancient Greek, in the centuries between the Homeric period and the New Testament, evolves from an SOV language to an SVO one, with extensive variation between the two orders during the long transition period (Taylor 1990, 1992). In early Spanish, clitics vary in their behavior between XP's and X-zero elements; and the language, like Middle French (Adams 1987a, 1987b; Dupuis 1989; Vance 1992), is variably V2 (Fontana 1993). Once again, modern Spanish and French exhibit none of this complexity. Indeed, in no case that we have investigated does the variation associated with syntactic change correspond to a diachronically stable alternation in

another language. The discussion to follow is an attempt to explain this fact, extending an argument that we and others have made in the past (see especially Santorini 1992) to the effect that syntactic change proceeds via competition between grammatically incompatible options which substitute for one another in usage. One source of support for this view of syntactic change is the apparently general validity of the “Constant Rate Hypothesis” (Kroch 1989c), according to which, in all surface linguistic contexts reflecting a given syntactic change, usage frequencies change at the same rate. This constant rate effect, described below, shows that changing rates of usage reflect the gradual replacement of one abstract grammatical option by another and that the process of change itself is governed by a grammatically-defined winner-take-all competition. The question then arises as to why change should proceed in this way. In particular, we would like to know how the grammatical options are defined and why they are mutually exclusive. Here we follow the line of recent work in syntactic theory, which has proposed that syntactic variation among languages is due to cross-linguistic differences in the morpho syntactic properties of functional heads, among which we include directionality. Syntactic heads, we believe, behave like morphological formatives generally in being subject to the well-known “Blocking Effect” (Aronoff 1976), which excludes morphological doublets, and more generally, it seems, any coexisting formatives that are not functionally differentiated (see Kiparsky 1982b), in a kind of global economy constraint on the storage of linguistic items. Under a morphological conception of syntactic properties, the blocking effect will also exclude variability in the feature content of syntactic heads, as the resultant variant heads would have the status of doublets. This exclusion, however, does not mean, either for morphology or for



syntax, that languages never exhibit doublets. Rather it means that doublets.

## 2.3 Semantic properties

We found the same structure can be used to express passive meaning, regardless of whether the structure is active or passive, but they focused on the expression of different frequency of use and effectiveness.

We have found that to express a passive meaning, or a passive concept is generally the structure of the corresponding passive. However, the meaning of the expression of the structure of the passive and the passive voice in this small confined areas, is a common expression of both passive fixed structure, and the passive meaning of the expression of other non-fixed structure.

## Chapter 3. Previous Works

### 3.1 Traditional approach

The study on the English passive construction has often been thought of as the analysis of the relationship with its active counterpart in both semantic and syntactic characteristics. Some traditional authors have interpreted the formation of the passive construction out of a transformation from their corresponding active construction at the syntactic level: (a) moving the direct object to the subject position; (b) inserting the adequate passive auxiliary; (c) substituting the past participle for the verb stem; (d) introducing the preposition *by before* the agent through rewriting the original subject. For example, Sweet(1898:112)remarks when dealing with the sentence *The dog killed the rat*:

"We may wish to make the object-word rat into the subject-word of the sentence. This we do by changing the active form *killed* into the corresponding passive form *was killed*: *The rat was killed*. The original subject is added, if necessary, by means of the preposition *by*: *The rat was killed by the dog*. In this sentence, rat is the inverted object and *by the dog* the inverted subject."

Quirk et al (1985:160) have the comparable point of view, and argue that the active-passive correspondence can be active verb phrase + noun phrases expressed by the formula "noun phrase, + noun phrase2+passive verb phrase + noun phrase. " Position In the formula, NP1 and NP2 are the noun phrases designated solely by their position in the sentence. Bo bing (2000) holds the same

viewpoint when it comes to the transformation of active SVO construction into the passive. Therefore, the passive construction is generated to some extent, by a manipulation of the active counterpart into the passive sentence.

The traditional approach often assumes that the active construction and its passive counterpart have the same meaning. For example, Palmer (1965:87) states that "...the passive has no meaning. We often wish to say that a sentence may be passivized without change of meaning... What is meant is that there is no true difference in the truth conditions—that if the active is true so is the passive." That is to say, there is no discrepancy in meaning between the passive and the active other than the formal features by rearrangement of the two clause elements—object of the active verb is the subject of the passive while the subject of the active is the agent of the passive. Quirk et al (1985:160) hold the similar idea that "although the corresponding active and passive sentences appear to be radically different, the relations of meaning between their elements remain the same."

Some authors, however, have indicated that there are meaning differences between such pairs. Sweet (1898:113) characterizes one of the functions the passive construction serves as "bringing the object of a transitive verb into prominence by making it the subject of the sentence." Here the notion of "prominence" doing with the semantics of an utterance highlights what the speaker wants to communicate. Therefore, such pairs can't paraphrase each other because different salience in meaning is imposed on them. More or less in the same vein, Jespersen (1948:120) states that, although an active sentence and its passive counterpart "mean essentially the same thing... they are not in every respect synonymous. The verb is

in some cases put in the active, in others in the passive."

With regard to the semantics of the passive construction, those who state there is no difference in meaning between the active and the passive go to extremes. However, those aware of the discrepancy are not well equipped to interpret it sufficiently even though they put forward the notion of "prominence" which sheds some light on our future research later.

In my opinion, this opinion of active-passive alteration is too absolute to explain the whole picture of the English passive construction since some verbs can be passivized while some can not. Seemingly, the passive construction is subordinate to the active since it needs nothing but a transformation that involves a change in the position of the subject and the object. As Granger (1983:5) points out, what "the correlation traditionalists have in mind can in no way be regarded as an absolute correlation: the existence of an active construction does not necessarily imply the existence of a passive construction and vice versa." For one thing, the speaker can be enabled to describe the event from the patient's point of view. However, not all the events or states expressed by means of the active constructions can be described from the patient's point of view:

- (1) a. Smith deserted the army  
b. The army was deserted by Smith. (unacceptable)
- (2) a. All the generals deserted the army.  
b. The army was deserted by all the generals.  
(acceptable) (Bolinger, 1977:10)

How is it that the differences in acceptability of the above passive constructions 1 b and 2b occur? I argue that whether some active constructions can be passivized does not rely formally on the

syntactic basis, but to some extent relies on semantic information. In 1 a, Smith is an ordinary soldier in the army, who is not in a position to desert the army, while in 2a, things are very different and all the generals are in a position to do so. However, the traditional approach seems to ignore the issue in this regard. Another thing, some verbs can be used in one passive construction while rejecting another one.

- (3) a. The island was walked across in an hour.  
b. The road was walked across. (unacceptable)
- (4) a. He was lost sight of.  
b. Sight was lost of him. (unacceptable) (Granger, 1983:6)

Acceptability is a conceptual problem, not a grammatical one. Therefore, the unacceptability of the sentences above depends on the cognitive ability of the speaker rather than the occurrence of some verb or verb phrases. We can refer to 4.2.1 below for further discussion.

Luo Liqun (2003) proposes that transforming the active construction into the passive is determined by many factors: verb constraints, context constraints, meaning constraints, and genre constraints. However, the constraints involved do not account for the unacceptability of some passive constructions well. Nor is it applicable to teaching in practice because learners may feel it troublesome to memorize all the constraints or rules and make a sensible decision.

Other authors have not persisted in the idea that the derivation of the passive construction involves a transformation operated on the active. For example, Hill (1963:73) argues that "it is possible to make either the front position or the end position the most emphatic...

Relative prominence of either the active subject or the active object would not be the determinant factor in the choice between the two constructions." He also puts forward the following hypothesis:

"Other things being equal, more definite things and things already known are therefore more likely to come early in the sentence than less definite or new ones. Thus, it would be usual to find *The snake* bit some one in the active, and *John was bitten by a snake* in the passive, whatever the stressing of these utterances, because the *snake* and *John* are more definite than a *snake* and *someone*, and because the *snake* and *John* refer to things already known in the context, whereas *a snake and someone* refer to new elements." (ibid.)

However, the opinion on this side is not so satisfactory in that it does not give us convincing evidence of how the passive construction is generated in essence. As we have put above, there's no absolute relation between the transitive sentence and its passive counterpart. That is to say, not every transitive verb can be transformed into the form of *to be* plus the past participle.

## 3.2 Structural approach

Structuralists are interested in the interrelationship between units, also called surface phenomena, and the rules by which the units can be put together. The father of modern linguistics, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, as a structuralist, holds that the most important kind of relation between units in a signifying system is a syntagmatic relation, which "applies not only to words, but to groups

of words and to complex units of every size and kind." (ibid, 2001:122) Despite the difference in grammar rules, the linguistic forms are all structured in the same way: words are put together within a grammatical system to make sense.

Structural analysis is said to be formal, in the sense that the units are all defined as internal relations with each other. Structuralists have applied their purely formal approach to the analysis of the passive construction. The notion of subject is defined in a purely formal way: "Subject then is a formal linguistic structural matter; it is a particular construction for a Class 1 word; it is not a matter of the meaning of the word with reference to a real situation." (Fries, 1952:176) In this case, how the subject is defined relies solely on the basis of formal criteria. The study on meanings of the language comes to a second step. The meaning of the passive construction is interpreted as follows: whenever this pattern- 1A(be) 2-ed- occurs, the subjects is understood to undergo the action of the sentence. The word *be*...means that the auxiliary is to be some form of the word *be*. The symbol 2-ed means that the verb is to be a past form." (Roberts,1956:162)

With regard to the structural approach to the passive construction, where the word order makes sense, the interpretation of the passive construction's meaning almost amounts to nothing, irrelevant to the use or function of the construction. Explaining the grammatical categories mostly stays at the structural sense. What counts in their eyes is the form far more than the meaning. Moreover, as Huddleston (1971:65) remarks, "Fries' grammatical description accounts only for the differences, not for the likenesses." Therefore, the relationship between the active and the passive is ignored.

### 3.3 Transformational approach

Many linguists working with the transformational-generative approach adopt the notion of the passive construction resulting from the transformation from the active. Transformational-generative analysis operates on deep abstract constructs which are related to the constituents of surface sentences.

Chomsky (1957:112) introduces the original passive transformation that the passive construction is derived from an active deep structure through the optional transformation as is shown below, which involves the inversion of the two NPs and addition of *by* before the second NP, and the addition of *be + en* to the auxiliary constituent.

(5) NP 1-Aux-V-NP2-NP2-Aux+ *be + en*-V -*by*+ NP1 (ibid.)

At first glance, one might come to the conclusion that the passive transformation is much the same as the active-passive correlation proposed by traditionalists. However, the concept of correlation and the passive transformation are not the same theory. As is interpreted by Granger (1983:14), "the former is a horizontal, side by side relationship, the latter is clearly a vertical relationship: the process involved is a unidirectional process, a derivation." That is to say, the passive construction is transformed from the deep structure of the active rather than from the active surface structure.

However, that formulation leaves a few questions. For example, the relations between the passive and the active are ambiguous, such as examples involving quantifiers: *Every school boy knows one joke at least.* And *One joke at least is known by every school boy.* According to Quirketal(1985:165), the two sentences express totally different



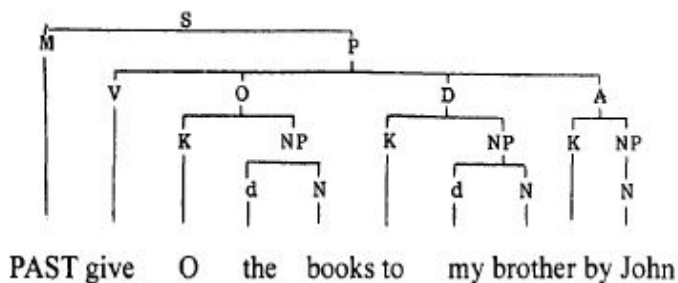
meanings. The first sentence "favors the reading`each school boy knows at least some joke or other.", whereas the other sentence" favors the reading` There is one particular joke which is known to every schoolboy." '(ibid) Besides, not all transitive verbs can under go passivization, as Palmer(1965:83) remarks verbs such as resemble, lack, cost, weigh, mean, etc., which" seem to be transitive and to have objects, never or rarely occur in the passive."

Katz and Postal question the view that the passive construction and the active construction are transformational related. They argue that a passive derives from an underlying phrase-maker "containing an adverb manner constituent dominating by plus a passive morpheme dummy" (Katz & Postal, 1964:72). This analysis is accepted by Chomsky (1965) who replaces his previous formulation of passive transformational grammar in what is known as the Standard Theory. Chomsky (1965:104) reformulates that the verbs that cannot be passivized are all verbs that cannot take manner adverbs freely. The new rule accounted not only for the passive constructions with transitive verbs or verb phrases, but also for those involving intransitive verbs or verb phrases. For example, *John is looked up to by very one.*

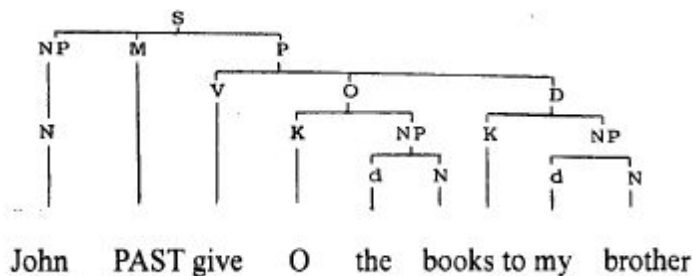
On the whole, several basic features of Chomsky's analysis have been exposed to us. One feature is that the passive is closely related to the active through a passive transformation, in the sense that a deep structure is basically active in transformation. A second feature is that the object of by in the passive construction is treated as a subject in the deep structure. A third feature is that all or some of the grammatical morphemes marking the passive construction, such as by, be, and the past participle, are meaningless, serving purely formal or syntactic function.

The transformational-generative approach has ever undergone the split, which yields several theoretical assumptions. For example, Fillmore develops a new type of transformational theory, the case theory. From his viewpoint, the passivization results from the choice of a non-normal surface subject while the normal choice of subject is the agentive present in underlying structure. (Cited in Azevedo, 1980:14) If the objective or the dative is chosen, the non-normal choice is registered in the verb which is obligatorily specified as [+passive]. This can be illustrated by the following diagrams (6)

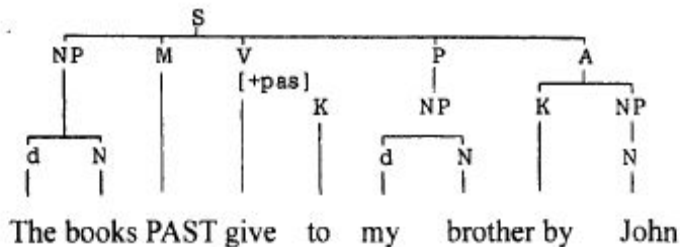
(6)



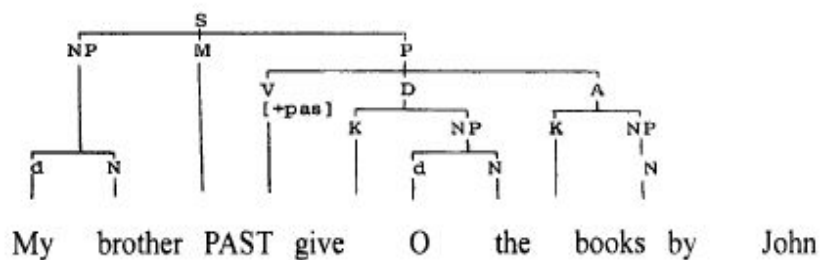
Agentive chosen as subject



Objective chosen as subject



Dative chosen as subject



Case grammar postulates the same underlying structure for both the passive and the active, thus avoiding the controversy that whether the passive is derived from surface or deep sentence or is constructed independently. The semantic relations among different constituents remain unchanged whether the sentence is eventually organized as a passive construction or as an active construction. However, it does not investigate the mechanism for the choice of one entity over another since the passive construction and its non-passive counterpart are equivalent in the sense that they have the same underlying sentence. Therefore, it remains to be known what motivates a speaker to choose a non-normal subject.

To be brief, in the transformational approach adopted by the Chomsky and his followers or challengers, meaning is peripheral to the study of language. What they keep eyes on in the study of

language is more of syntax. From their perspective, the structures of language are not driven by meaning, but instead are governed by principles or sentence rules essentially independent of meaning. Thus, there is lack of the investigation into the semantics associated with syntactic structures. They are converted to language-internal structural principles as explanatory theory. The disadvantage of the transformational approach is also mentioned by Granger (1983:48):

"The complexity and richness of the passive structure... are not even hinted at in the transformational accounts of the passive. The main reason... is that transformation lists - and most particularly Chomsky - have not investigated the passive for its own sake but as a 'tool' to demonstrated the validity of the different transformational models."

### 3.4 Cognitive approach

Langacker (1990:127), within the Cognitive Grammar (CG) framework, argues that though pairs like *Alice approached Bill*, and *Bill was approached by Alice*. "Have essentially the same composite structure, accounting for their rough synonym, these composite structures are arrived at by different compositional paths, and the sentences are thus semantically distinct because of their analyzability." The passive is an independent construction and that it is not a syntactic reorganization of the corresponding active. To put it simply, the passive construction is generated independently rather than from the active.

Secondly, all three grammatical morphemes are meaningful and figure actively in the semantic structure of the passive construction

so that the organization of a passive construction is driven by its meaning. "The crucial feature of a passive... is attributed to the meaning of [V-en-2], i.e. the passive variant of the past-participial morpheme (-ed)." (Langacker, 2004b:201) The subject, as trajectory, coincides with a procession participant that would otherwise be the direct object. He also adds that "because the passive participle is a temporal,...it requires the support of *be*, the passive variant of *be*, which imposes its procession profile on the composite expression." (ibid. ) Besides, the object of *by* as the other participant, namely the trajector of verb is either left implicit or specified with a *by*-phrase.

Xiong Xueliang and Zhijun (2003) and Wang Zhijun (2005) have ever followed the assumptions of cognitive linguistics "human experience conceptualization-schematization-linguistic form" and made an inquiry into the contrastive study of English and Chinese passives. In their findings, the English passive and the Chinese one are not equivalent in translation. According to Xiong Xueliang and Wang Zhijun (2003:154), the English passive constructions can be subcategorized into core passive, semi-passive and pseudo-passive. Wang Zhijun and Yang Xiaoqian (2002) carried out the corpus-based way to find out something in common in the use of English and Chinese passive. They interpreted their findings from a cognitive viewpoint to achieve understanding of the passive in different genres. Tang Yanling (2003) explained that the essential meaning of the English passive is that of "*be+ -en*" structure, which indicates agency, i.e. an agentive action with an agent expressed overtly or covertly.

In the cognitive approach, meaning is so central to language that it must be a primary focus of study while linguistic structures serve the function of expressing meanings. According to Heyvaert (2003:17), "a description of language which is truly natural, however, can only be

arrived at when the relation between grammar and semantics is recognized to be natural or non-arbitrary." Linguistic forms, in this view, are closely linked to the semantic structures are designed to express. Semantic structures of all meaningful linguistic units analyses of the passive construction research even though they haven't should be investigated. Therefore, they are worthy of being assimilated in our future so far put forward the bird's-eye view of the passive construction in various forms.

## Chapter 4 Types of passive construction

### 4.1 Transitive Passive

According to Im, Gyeong-Seop (1008), categorize transitive verbs are categorized into different types.

- (7) a. John **threw** the ball.  
b. The ball was **thrown** by John.  
c. John **gave** Mary a book.  
d. Mary was **given** a book by John. 1)  
e. A book was **given** to Mary by John.  
f. John **sent** her to Seoul.  
g. She was **sent** to Seoul by John. 2)  
h. They **believe** [it] to be easy to annoy Ben.  
i. It is **believed** to be easy to annoy Ben.  
j. They **believed** to be a dragon in the wood.  
k. There is **believed** to be a dragon in the wood.  
l. They widely **believed** [that John was ill].  
m. That John was ill was widely **believed**.  
n. It was widely **believed** that John was ill.

The verb '*threw*' in example (1a) is a *strict-transitive verb* and the verb phrase in the sentence is a V NP type. The verb '*gave*' in Example (1c) is a *ditransitive-verb*. The verb phrase in the sentence is V NP NP and the corresponding transitive passive is (1d,e). The verb *sent* in example (1f) is *prepositional-transitive-verb*, and the

verb phrase of the sentence is V NP PP(to), and its corresponding passive phrase is (1g). The verb 'believe' in examples (1 h, j, and i) is an *object-raising-verb* type and the verb phrase of the sentence is V NP VP(inf) and its corresponding passive phrase is (1 I and k). When an object is there, an empty word, *there is a dragon in the wood* is a correct sentence. The verb phrase in example (11) is V CP(that) and its corresponding phrase is as seen example (1m). For a transitive passive where the verb takes *-that* clause as an object, *that-* clause becomes a subject and *that-*clause as a subject is substituted by it as seen in example (1n).

## 4.2 Complex Transitive Passive

According to Huddleston & Pullum (2002), complex transitive passive constructions are categorized into four as follows:

- (8) a. They **made friends with** some of the Yek sergeants.  
 b. \*Friends were made with some of the Yek sergeants.  
 c. \*Some of the Yek sergents were made friends with.  
 d. They **cast doubt on** his motives.  
 e. Doubt was cast on his motives.  
 f. \*His motives were cast doubt on.  
 g. They **lost sight of** our goal.  
 h. \*Sight was lost of our goal.  
 i. Our goal was lost sight of.  
 j. NO one **took advantage of** her talents.  
 k. Not much advantage was taken of her talents.  
 l. Her talents weren't taken advantage of.

Huddleston & Pullum (2002) categorized complex transitive passive constructions into four types. The verbs such as *make friends with*,



*give birth to*, and *find favor with* in type 1 of example (8a) can not be transformed into general passive and prepositional passive as in example(8b and c). The verbs such as *cast doubt on*, *do justice to*, *keep tabs on*, *make an attempt on*, *make mention of*, and *raise an objection to* can be transformed into a general passive as in example (8e) and can not be transformed into a prepositional passive as in (8f). The verbs such as *lose sight of*, *give way to*, *lay hold of*, *make fun of*, *set eyes on* in example (8g) can not be transformed into passive (8h). The verbs such as *take advantage of*, *make an example of*, *make a fuss of*, *make use of*, *pay tribute to*, *see much/little of*, and *take note of* in type 4 of example (8j) can be transformed into general passive and prepositional passive as in example (8k and l).

### 4.3 Phrasal Verb Passive

Let's look at phrasal verb passive.

- (9) a. The ocean **swept away** the boat.  
 b. The ocean swept it away.  
 c. It was swept away by the ocean.  
 d. My mother **approved** [of the plan].  
 e. The plan was **approved** for by my mother.  
 f. I **flew** to/from Boston.  
 g. \*Boston was **flown** to/from by me.  
 h. The bed was **slept in**.  
 I. \*New York was **slept in**.  
 j. My new hat has been **sat on**.  
 k. They **have** a nice house.  
 l. \*A nice house is **had** by them.

As the verb phrase in example (9a) is a V Particle phrasal verb type, particle movement is allowed as in example (9b) and passive construction is also allowed as in example (9d). As the verb phrase in

example (9d) is simple intransitive verb V PP (PFORM), it can be transformed into prepositional passive as in (9e) and of prepositional phrase is a complement *of* the verb '*approved*'. As the verb phrase in example (9f) is a V PP, and prepositions *to* and *from* are adjuncts, it can not be transformed into a prepositional passive as in (9g). The verb phrase in example (9i) is a V PP(locative) and the preposition '*in*' is an adjunct, but it can be transformed into a prepositional passive. However, as the example (9i) has an affected condition as a pragmatic constraint of prepositional passive, that is, as the subject of passive is physically and mentally affected by an action of an agent it can not be a sentence. In (9i), as it is hard to think that *New York* is affected by an action of going to bed, it is not a correct sentence, but in (9h, j) as it can be considered that the bed is affected by an action of sleeping and my new hat is affected by an action of wearing, they are correct sentences. The verb '*have*' in example (9k) is originally a static verb, the corresponding passive sentence (9l) can not be correct.

## 4.4 Intransitive Passive

Let's look at passive construction with V PP(PFORM).

- (10) a. They **asked for** more food.  
 b. More food was **asked for**.  
 c. Everything **hinges on** his decision.  
 d. \*His decision is **hinged on** by every thing.

The verb phrase in example (10) is the same as it is externally V PP (PHORM), but its passive is different. The verbs such as *ask for*, *call for*, *look for*, *abide by*, *count on*, *run into*, *hit on*, *dispose of*, *look*

*after, see to, and wait on* in type 1 of example (10a) can be transformed into prepositional passive as in (10b). The type 2 verbs such as *hinge on, stand by, stand for, abound in make for, come across, consist of and feel for* in example (10c) can not be made into prepositional passive as in (10d).

## 4.5 Complex Intransitive Passive

This is the passive with the verb phrase of V PART PP(PFORM).

- (11) a. I **put up with** the neighbor's noise.  
 b. The neighbor's noise was **put up with**.  
 c. I do not **get along with** my sister: we have nothing in common.  
 d. \*My sister wasn't **got along with**.

The verb phrase of example (11) is the same as a V Part (FORM) PP (PFORM), but its passive constructions vary. The type 1 verbs such as *put up with, make up for, cash in on, look out for, come down on, stand up to and tie in* in example (11a) can be made into prepositional passive as in (11b). The type 2 verbs in example (11c) such as *get along with, keep up with, hold out for, come up with, get without, and tie in with* can not be made into prepositional passive as in (11c).

## 4.6 Adjective Passive

Let's look at the properties of adjective passive.

- (12) a. I was **surprised** at his actions.  
 b. They were **satisfied with** his actions.  
 c. Her actions much/\*very **embarrassed** by her actions.

- d. He was \*much/very **embarrassed** by her actions.
- e. \*Her actions looked/seemed/remained **embarrassing** him.
- f. He looked/seemed/remained **embarrassed** by her actions.

Examples (12a and b) are an adjectival passive and have a restriction that they use other prepositions than 'by'. According to Huddleston & Pullum(2002), they are used as a descriptive complement of the action verb '*become*' , they become adjectival passive. It is demonstrated that the adjectival passive exists in that the verb qualifier '*much*' is used in example (12c), but the adjectival qualifier '*very*' is used in passive (12d), and a passive construction is used as a complement of the connecting verbs '*look*', '*seem*' and '*remain*' As in (12e, f).

## 4.7 Get Passive

Let's look at the properties of Get Passive.

- (13) a. I **got phoned** by a woman friend,
- b. Rosie **got struck** by lightning.
- c. \*The teacher **got liked** by every student.
- d. \*The letter **got written** by a poet.

According to Huddleston & Pullum (2002), features of get passive are presented as follows: they are evaded in literary representation, they are used with action verbs, the subjects are interpreted as agents, and they are used in clauses involved in adverse circumstance such as '*My watch got stolen*' or benefit such as '*Kim got promoted*'. The example (13 a and b) are get passives and the verb 'get' selects VP(pas) with such semantic or pragmatic constraint. When the predicate is a static verb as in example (13c), or it has no interpretation of an agent as in (13d), get passive is not allowed.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

Having reviewed the previous literature from the traditional, structural, transformational and cognitive approaches, we detected more or less problems or incompleteness. In this thesis, we tried to study passive construction of English. The primary aim of this thesis is to categorize the syntactic analyses based on the properties of passive constructions. At the beginning, we saw what the passive is, and how to analyze it. The next purpose was to list some basic properties of passive construction. The study on the English passive construction has often been thought of as the analysis of the relationship with its active counterpart in both semantic and syntactic characteristics. In this part we saw the traditional approach and transformational approach. In the following part we looked at the types of passive morphology.

Chapter one introduced the aim of this thesis and listed the passive types.

Chapter two introduced general syntactic properties of passive construction.

In Chapter three, for syntactic analysis, with regard to the semantics of the passive construction, those who state there is no difference in meaning between the active and the passive go to extremes. There we saw some previous works on passive construction.

Chapter four introduced types of passive constructions according to syntactic examples.

According to the categorizations, we classified transitive verbs into

seven types, and we got a diagram:

	Types	Constructions
passive constructions types	transitive passive	V NP, V NP NP, V NP PP(to), V NP VP(inf), V CP(that)
	complex transitive passive	The verbs such as <i>make friends with</i> , <i>give birth to</i> , and <i>find favor with</i> can not be transformed into general passive and prepositional passive.
		The verbs such as <i>cast doubt on</i> , <i>do justice to</i> , <i>keep tabs on</i> , <i>make an attempt on</i> , <i>make mention of</i> , and <i>raise an objection to</i> can be transformed into a general passive and can not be transformed into a prepositional passive
		The verbs such as <i>lose sight of</i> , <i>give way to</i> , <i>lay hold of</i> , <i>make fun of</i> , <i>set eyes</i> can not be transformed into passive
		The verbs such as <i>take advantage of</i> , <i>make an example of</i> , <i>make a fuss of</i> , <i>make use of</i> , <i>pay tribute to</i> , <i>see much/little of</i> , and <i>take note of</i> can be transformed into general passive and prepositional passive
	phrasal verb passive	V PP (PFORM), V PP(locative)
	intransitive passive	The verbs such as <i>ask for</i> , <i>call for</i> , <i>look for</i> , <i>abide by</i> , <i>count on</i> , <i>run into</i> , <i>hit on</i> , <i>dispose of</i> , <i>look after</i> , <i>see to</i> , and <i>wait on</i> can be transformed into prepositional passive
		The verbs such as <i>hinge on</i> , <i>stand by</i> , <i>stand for</i> , <i>abound in</i> <i>make for</i> , <i>come across</i> , <i>consist of</i> and <i>feel for</i> can not be made into prepositional passive
	complex intransitive passive	V Part (FORM) PP (PFORM), <i>verbs such as put up with</i> , <i>make up for</i> , <i>cash in on</i> , <i>look out for</i> , <i>come down on</i> , <i>stand up to</i> and <i>tie in</i> can be made into prepositional passive
		The verbs such as <i>get along with</i> , <i>keep up with</i> , <i>hold out for</i> , <i>come up with</i> , <i>get without</i> , and <i>tie in with</i> can not be made into prepositional passive
adjective passive	Adjectives formed from most verbs show an "active" or a "passive" relationship with the noun they modify by adding -ing or -ed.	
get passive	The get-passive is normally fairly informal and more likely to occur in casual conversation and informal sorts of writing than in formal writing. It is often used in agentless passives.	

Finally, by considering all the syntactic and semantic accounts, we try to explain the passive constructions in English as clearly as we can.

Furthermore, the passive constructions is classified into seven types in order to understand many passive forms existed, but we still have to explain the deviations of these constructions and the syntactic and semantic properties of these constructions.

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