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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Effectiveness of teaching the English passive voice in distance learning at an upper-
secondary school

Efektivita výuky anglického trpného rodu při distanční výuce na střední škole

Klára Dobrylovská

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Martin Mikuláš, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

The diploma thesis investigates the measurable progress in the ability of upper-secondary school students to form and use the passive voice after having been exposed to two online lessons on this grammar item. The theoretical part describes distance education, its varieties, and the tools that are assumed to make it effective. The empirical part of the thesis is based on the analysis of the two online lessons, the analysis of the students' development based on short pre- and post-tests developed to evaluate the students' knowledge, and an interview with two of the students. The thesis will attempt to reach a conclusion on whether there is a measurable development in students' understanding of the subject matter when taught in an online environment. The thesis proved that despite the distance form of education of the two lessons, the acquisition of the grammar item was successful.

KEYWORDS

education, distance, online, face-to-face, passive voice, English grammar

ABSTRAKT

Diplomová práce zkoumá měřitelný pokrok ve schopnosti studentů středních škol tvořit a používat trpný rod po absolvování dvou online lekcí této gramatické struktury. Teoretická část popisuje distanční vzdělávání, jeho varianty a nástroje, o kterých se předpokládá, že zvýší jeho efektivitu. Empirická část práce je založena na analýze dvou online lekcí, analýze vývoje znalostí studentů na základě krátkých pre- a post-testů vypracovaných k vyhodnocení znalostí studentů, a na rozhovoru se dvěma studenty. Práce se pokusí dospět k závěru, zda dochází k měřitelnému vývoji v chápání učiva studenty při výuce v online prostředí. Práce prokázala, že i přes distanční formu vzdělávání ve dvou vyučovacích hodinách bylo osvojení dané gramatiky úspěšné.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Vzdělávání, dálkové, online, prezenční, trpný rod, anglická gramatika

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Introduction

Distance education has become an incredibly important topic all around the world in the year 2020 due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. All elementary and secondary schools in the Czech Republic were closed on 11. 3. 2020 for the first time by the decision of the Czech government and remained fully closed for 282 days. Schools and students had to switch to a completely new and unknown format of education.

Although the students continued learning and attending school, questions began to arise whether it was possible for them to concentrate on the subject matter during online lessons or whether the distance form of education was at least to some degree effective in transferring knowledge to the students. Some even began to ask whether the time that the schools remain closed was not a lost time for the children in terms of education.

For those reasons, the topic of this thesis was selected in order to attempt to answer some of those questions on a small scale. The topic is addressing a very recent issue of the students in the Czech Republic and around the world and has not been discussed in many theses until now, which was another reason for its selection.

Moreover, what made the choice of the topic even easier was the possibility to teach several classes of students of an upper-secondary school during the teaching practice of 2021. Due to this opportunity, it was also possible to conduct small-scale research with the students testing their improvement over the course of the lessons and to attempt to answer whether distance education is effective in the short-term.

1 THEORETICAL PART

1.1 Distance education

According to Zlámalová (2001), distance education is controlled independent learning, which is coordinated by an educational institution, during which the teacher and learners are mostly or completely separated from each other. There is very little or no face-to-face contact between the teacher and students, however, students still follow the teacher's curriculum and use materials provided by the teacher.

According to Simonson, Smaldino and Zvacek (2015), four elements define distance education:

1. Distance education is carried out through institutions in a school environment, it is a guided process, not a self-study.
2. There is a geographical (or, on occasions, a temporal) separation between the teacher and learners. For this reason, some learners may find this mode of education more convenient.
3. The teacher and the group of learners maintain contact using interactive telecommunications, such as email or videoconference.
4. A distance education, in a similar way to in-person education, establishes a learning community comprising learners, the teacher and the shared learning resources.

If any of these four elements is missing, then, by the authors' definition, the event cannot be called distance education in its true sense (Simonson, Smaldino, Zvacek, 2015).

Distance education is an alternative to an in-person form of education, which is often viewed as the standard. In contrast to in-person education, which usually takes place in a classroom and in which both the teacher and students are physically present, modern distance education very often takes place in an online environment using videoconference tools and other supportive platforms (Simonson, Smaldino, Zvacek, 2015).

1.1.1 History of distance education

Although distance education might seem to be a recent concept, the idea is more than a century old. Distance learning and teaching have certainly grown and changed with the

development of the internet and modern technologies and their wide distribution among the public, but its tradition is quite long.

The first step of distance education was the emergence of correspondence study in the first half of the 19th century in England and France. This type of education later spread to other European countries, such as Germany or Austrian-Hungarian empire (Průcha, 2003).

In the second half of the 19th century, correspondence study became popular with many universities in the USA, such as the University of Chicago, where a whole department was dedicated to it. It gained a lot of success and about 3,000 students enrolled in the programme each year (Simonson, Smaldino, Zvacek, 2015).

During and after the World War I, due to the restructuring of agriculture, the rise of technology and the huge number of women beginning to work in factories, more accessible education was needed. In the 1920s and 1930s, the growth of cinematography and broadcast helped the development of a new form of distance education. (Průcha, 2003). According to Simonson, Smaldino and Zvacek (2015), in the 1920s at least 176 educational radio stations were founded in order to provide learning opportunities for the public. In the 1930s, some universities in the United States including the University in Iowa or Kansas State College began experimenting with television broadcasts and created several educational programmes. Such programmes developed over the years and in the 1950s it was possible to attend college credit courses via television.

As described by Průcha (2003), another step forward in distance education happened in Europe after World War II, when such education became massively popular in all its forms: correspondence study and radio and television programmes. Since then, distance education has been developing together with technology, its milestones being the production of satellites in the 1960s, the invention of CD-ROMs, and the emerging of computer networks, such as some company intranets and, most importantly, the internet.

In the Czech Republic distance education has become popular in the 1990s. Since then it has become possible to study various types of courses that way and it is predominantly used in university education, although usually in combination with in-person study (Průcha, 2003).

In the year 2020 however, distance education became more popular and more widely used than ever before, due to the effects of the global pandemic of coronavirus and the consequent closure of educational institutions in various countries all around the world. In the Czech Republic, all primary, as well as secondary and upper-secondary schools and universities, were forced to transfer all of their classes into the online environment and learn to work with online tools and resources (Průcha, 2003).

While distance education was not obligatory for students before summer 2020, the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (hereinafter referred to as MEYS) issued an act making participation in distance education officially compulsory as of the beginning of the new school year (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020). Apart from that, the MEYS created a handbook containing instructions and recommendations for teachers in connection with distance education.

1.1.2 MEYS' recommendations for distance education

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports created a handbook in order to help elementary and high-school teachers and directors organize and, to an extent, unify distance education. The handbook was issued in September 2020 and is valid until schools are able to return to in-class mode (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020).

The first two parts of the handbook contain information about the legislative framework of distance education including references to external sources and the relevant governmental acts. These parts describe not only the duties of the teachers towards students but the duties of students as well. They also instruct the school directors on how to alter the official school documentation in order for it to reflect the specifics of distance education and make suggestions as to the role of school canteens. They also provide details concerning the organization of teachers' schedules. They provide clear possibilities for the situations when the teachers are in quarantine or for the possibility that due to the distance education the teachers will not be able to teach the same number of classes as in in-class education.

The third chapter of the handbook focuses on describing the various types of education and the conditions that need to be met in order for the alternatives to in-class education to be implemented. Specifically, the handbook describes in-class education as the norm and mixed education and distance education as the alternatives.

The rest of the chapters deal with specific problems which can occur during distance education. The handbook presents in detail suggestions and recommendations concerning the optimal organization of distance education at various types of schools, starting with nursery schools up to universities, also including art schools, giving examples of activities suitable for online classes, and including references to external sources where additional suggestions, webinars or materials can be found. These chapters will prove the most important to not only the directors of schools but also individual teachers, as specific suggestions are made for the online lessons in terms of assessing the students and using various online platforms for learning.

Several chapters also touch on specific subjects such as the education for children with specific needs or individual plans, the ways to evaluate students during distance education or information about online tools. The handbook also deals with the subject of fulfilling the requirements set by the national or school curricula and covering the compulsory educational content.

The handbook was designed specifically for the purpose of helping Czech schools organize distance education during the closure of schools as a consequence of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The handbook does not focus on proposing specific recommendations to teaching individual subjects, however, it provides useful information and suggestions to predominantly school headmasters, who were advised to consult the handbook in order to better organize distance education at their schools and to be better able to communicate the government requests to the teachers (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020).

1.1.3 Types of distance education

There are two main types of distance learning and teaching: synchronous and asynchronous learning. The usefulness of those two types of learning has been debated in

length, and both advantages, as well as disadvantages, can be found in each (Dennis, Robert, 2005).

Synchronous distance education is defined as such education that happens in real-time and requires live participation of both the teacher and learners at the same time. It is usually realized through videoconference tools such as Skype or Zoom. It allows for a faster and livelier interaction between the participants and is also more flexible; learners can ask questions and it is possible for the teacher to adjust the content and the pace of the lessons according to learners' needs.

According to Robert and Dennis's cognitive model (2005), synchronous education increases learners' motivation to learn. It was also perceived by many learners as the more informal type of learning and a more social one. During synchronous education, the teacher is better able to check learners' understanding and monitor the class (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020).

However, synchronous education also has its disadvantages. It may be more flexible in terms of the content of the classes but is stricter in terms of schedule. From its very definition, it requires the simultaneous participation of all the participants, which means that learners cannot decide on their own when to learn. It also requires that all students have access to a communication device and a good internet connection at the time of the lesson. Synchronous education can also be very demanding in terms of the participants' attention and it is neither suitable nor healthy to attend a large number of synchronous lessons in one day (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020).

Asynchronous education, on the other hand, does not require the participants to log in and participate at the same time. Therefore, it is considered to be more flexible. Instead of using videoconference tools, asynchronous learning relies on more traditional methods of communication such as email or discussion boards. This type of education requires learners to be more independent and to be able to organize their own work, but it allows them to work at the pace they choose by themselves. In the case of uncertainty, learners should be able to reach out to their teacher or mentor and ask for clarification, but the interaction tends to be much slower, and misunderstandings can occur more easily than during synchronous connection (Hrastinski, 2008).

Robert and Dennis's cognitive model (2005) shows that asynchronous communication increases one's ability to process information, as in asynchronous education learners have more time to analyse the message in order to comprehend it before responding. Additionally, the participants do not get distracted as easily, and, as Stefan Hrastinski's research (2008) demonstrates, a larger percentage of sentences exchanged between the individual participants is related to the actual content of the classes than in synchronous education.

Due to the fact that asynchronous education relies on the independence of students, it might not be as suitable for children as it is for adults, as children might require more support from the teacher or their parents to be able to work on their tasks and maintain discipline. Additionally, social contact with their peers is an invaluable part of school education for children, and it might be more difficult for them to adjust to working alone. For those reasons the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports advise that Czech schools effectively combine both of these types of education. The handbook does not specify exactly what number of lessons should be taught synchronously or asynchronously but leaves that to individual schools to decide what would suit them best (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020).

1.1.4 Offline education

The Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic distinguish another alternative to in-class education other than online education and they list it as so-called offline learning. It is defined as a subtype of distance education that does not use any kind of online tool. This type of education is prominently based on self-study with the help of textbooks or workbooks. Offline education can be used for students who have no access to an internet connection or do not have the necessary devices to connect to online classes. In such cases, teachers can use telephone, post, or personal meetings to assign tasks and to provide feedback to students (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020; NPI CR, 2020).

According to the MEYS's handbook (2020), offline education is especially suitable for young children, students whose socio-economic situation does not allow for them to access online classes or for students with special needs. The advantage of such education is

that both students and the teacher do not need to be able to work with modern technologies and do not need any tools. On the other hand, such education is little more than self-study and does not provide much space for the explanation of the contents and sufficient feedback. According to the SYPO Project (System of support for professional development of teachers and principals, 2020), students might also feel less motivated to study. In addition, it is necessary for the teachers to help them maintain motivation, for example by providing emotional support (NPI CR, 2020).

1.1.5 Communication in distance education

Education, in its very definition, requires some sort of communication and interaction to occur between the teacher and the learner. It is not difficult to establish communication, verbal or non-verbal in a classroom where all interested parties are present. However, it is more demanding to do so in distance education. Communication and interaction can occur in various forms, but their representation in lessons changes depending on whether the lesson takes place in a classroom or an online environment (Prozesky, 2000).

Verbal and non-verbal communication

Communication is often classified into verbal and non-verbal. According to various sources, more than half of our social interactions are realized by means of non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact or body language. According to Bambaeroo, Fatemeh, and Shokrpour (2017), non-verbal language is used to complement verbal communication and to convey the emotions behind our words. For non-verbal communication to be successfully realized it is necessary that all the participating parties see each other.

Distance education does not allow for non-verbal language to take such a large part in the communication between the teacher and learners. Even when using videoconference tools in the lessons it is impossible to convey as much information by gestures and body language, simply because people usually only show their face on the camera, not their full body (Soraya, Kirana, 2018).

According to a study conducted by Salah Ali Mohammad Ali from the Tobruk University, only approximately seven percent of a message is sent through verbal communication and the remaining 93 percent are sent by means of non-verbal language, such as facial expressions, gestures, or eye contact (Ali, 2011). These results show that non-verbal language is essential in any type of interpersonal communication and removing this factor as it happened in distance education might have an impact on the teaching and learning processes.

Types of communication in online environment

Caroline Haythornthwaite (2002) establishes three types of communication that are used in online education: content related communication, planning of tasks and social support. These types of communication prevail in online lessons and are vital in order for education to be successful.

Content related communication is used most frequently, it is used to share information about the discussed subject, to express ideas and to ask and answer questions relevant to the content of the lesson. The use of content related communication is similar in a classroom and an online environment.

Planning tasks is also essential in a quality lesson. The teacher needs to distribute tasks, coordinate pair or group work, give instruction and resolve conflicts that might occur in the group.

Social support might be overlooked by some teachers, but it is exactly that which creates a friendly atmosphere in the class. Such atmosphere is desirable for further cooperation with the class and having a good rapport with learners makes teaching much easier and may boost learners' motivation and effort (Haythornthwaite, 2002).

1.2 Communication tools used in distance education

During the time of the closure of schools in the Czech Republic, the teachers had to find new ways to communicate with their students. There are various tools the teachers can choose from, both for synchronous and asynchronous learning. The MEYS recommends that the school director choose one platform for all the teachers to use so as to avoid confusion and to make the transition as smooth as possible. The portal rvp.cz divides such tools into two main categories: student information systems and learning management systems. The portal also distinguishes videoconference tools and describes in detail how to choose the most suitable videoconference tool to use at school (NPI CR, Neumajer, 2020).

1.2.1 Student information systems

Student information systems are systems widely used across schools in the Czech Republic. They are a tool which these days is adapted to function as a simple communication channel between the teachers and students or their parents, and most of such systems also include the list of absence, students' marks, or their individual timetables. According to the Czech School Inspectorate, the most widely used student information system is Bakaláři. (Vybraná zjištění České školní inspekce k distančnímu vzdělávání, 2020)

Bakaláři

According to their own websites, the system Bakaláři¹ is used by more than 60% of Czech schools and by more than a million users. It is presented as a simple tool that includes not only a channel of communication between the school and students and their parents but also a variety of other instruments which are supposed to make the administration easier. Each student or teacher can access their timetable for each week, teachers can use it to make announcements to students and to mark the absences of students. As a matter of fact, Bakaláři is the tool that teachers use to deal with all administrative matters.

¹ <https://bakalari.cz>

As of the beginning of distance education, some schools have also exploited the possibility to submit documents into the system. In this way, Bakaláři can be used as one of the tools of asynchronous online education.

1.2.2 Learning management systems

Learning management systems are such systems that are supposed to work as virtual classrooms. In other words, they work as a shared forum for a group of students by means of which the group can communicate, ask questions, or assign and submit work. They serve as a platform for the administration and organization of the group and its activities (NPI CR, Neumajer, 2020).

Among the learning management systems that the MEYS recommends for the purpose of distance education at elementary, secondary, and upper-secondary schools is the platform Google Classroom. Despite the fact that this platform is not officially called a learning management system, it contains most of its prominent features (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2020).

Google Classroom

Google Classroom² is a tool that is supposed to work as a virtual alternative to a real classroom. It allows the teacher to stay in contact with their students and to easily communicate with them. Possibly the largest advantage of Google Classroom is the possibility to connect it to other tools from Google, such as Google Meet, a videoconference tool, or Jamboard, which serves as a virtual whiteboard the teacher can share with students.

This virtual classroom also allows the teacher to assign tasks to students, and they can consequently submit their work there as well. The teacher has the possibility to add comments to the individual students' submitted work, which makes the process of assessing and giving feedback much easier.

² <https://classroom.google.com/>

Overall, the system offers a wide range of options and it can be used without any complementary tools to provide an adequate alternative to a physical classroom for asynchronous distance teaching. The possibility of connecting other tools of the same brand is a great advantage.

1.2.3 Videoconference tools

Videoconference platforms are a tool of synchronous distance education. Such tools allow the teacher and the group of students to connect and communicate in real-time. Modern videoconference tools, such as Skype, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams offer a variety of possibilities aside from group calls, and the participants can share their screen or sound or divide into smaller groups (NPI CR, Neumajer, 2020).

Zoom

During the emerge of online education in 2020, Zoom³ has become one of the most popular videoconference tools. It became popular presumably due to its simple and effective design, but also because of the wide range of functions it offers.

This platform allows the class not only to communicate in real-time, but it also contains various special features, such as the possibility to divide students into so-called breakout rooms. At the beginning of the year 2020, it was the only videoconference tool out of those used in the Czech Republic offering such an option.

Despite the fact that Zoom has certain limitations, it became extremely popular during the pandemic among schools worldwide and, as a result of that, the company decided to temporarily cancel the fees and let schools use the platform for free. However, concerns were raised about the safety of the data collected by this videoconference tool and its overall safety (NPI CR, Neumajer, 2020).

³ <https://zoom.us>

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams⁴ is not a videoconference tool per se, as video calls are only one of the many features this platform offers. As a matter of fact, Teams functions very well as a Learning management system, as it allows for the overall organization and administration of a classroom to take place. It was not intended to be a tool for distance education at the beginning, but many schools around the Czech Republic had started using it as such and Microsoft responded to such development by adding several features which were intended to make the platform even more comfortable for teachers and students, such as adding the possibility to divide the group into breakout rooms similar to those in Zoom.

As mentioned above, according to their own websites Teams offers more than a videoconference platform. Each class can have a separate channel or team, in which the teachers can share materials or information with the students and use it to communicate with the whole class. Within those teams, the class can meet using videoconference, the teacher can assign tasks and students can submit them. When it comes to the safety of this platform, it seems to be better than in Zoom, as only the members of the particular team can see what is happening inside and only those can attend the videoconferences.

Each student or teacher can also see their own schedule of video meetings, which can also simplify the organization and planning of online education in general. Overall, Microsoft Teams is an adequate online alternative for in-person education, and it provides a comfortable and generally simple environment for organizing classes.

1.3 Differences between traditional and distance education

As mentioned above, there are several important differences between the discussed types of education. They differ in the level of contact between the teacher and students, the level of control the teacher has over the classroom and the student participation in the lesson. There have also been several studies that attempted to learn whether traditional and distance education also differ in the effectiveness and the progress which students make (O'Malley, McCraw, 1999).

⁴ <https://www.microsoft.com/cs-cz/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software/>

1.3.1 Contact and control in a classroom

The contact, or the lack of thereof, is probably the most obvious difference between traditional in-person education and distance education. While the traditional learning takes place, for the most part, in a classroom with all the participants present at the same time, during distance education, even in its synchronous form, the participants are separated and in contact only by means of technologies. The aspect of contact is closely related to the level of control that the teacher has over students and the overall organization of the lesson. (O'Malley, McCraw, 1999)

The reasons for the lower level of control over an online lesson are logical: it mostly stems from the lack of physical proximity of the teacher to learners as well as the seating in the classroom, which according to Callens (2011) supports the notion of natural hierarchy and in a certain manner establishes the teacher as an authority. That does not happen to such an extent in online classes, even in the synchronous form and in the case that students keep their cameras on. In this type of education, the teacher does not have such control over students. There is no seating that would support the teacher's position of authority and moreover, the teacher has limited means by which they could monitor what the individual students are doing and if they are paying attention to the subject matter. All these factors combined cause students to be less attentive and more easily distracted during online classes than during traditional in-person education.

1.3.2 Student participation

Student participation in classes is imperative and enhances their learning when it comes both to traditional classroom education and synchronous online education. (Simonson, Smaldino, Zvacek, 2015) Due to the lack of personal contact in virtual settings and the prolonged time periods between the question and the response because of the need to turn on and off the microphone, many students and teachers describe online classes as slower, less engaging, or more frustrating, as is shown in a study conducted by Noriko Hara and Rob Kling (2001).

Due to the large demand for tools to make distance education more engaging, videoconference platforms such as Microsoft Teams have added features such as the option

to divide students into so-called breakout rooms. This and other features can presumably enhance students' participation in the lesson by allowing the teacher to increase the student talking time by including activities in pairs or groups.

1.3.3 Effectivity of e-learning and distance education in general

A debate has arisen about whether distance education can be as effective for learners as traditional learning, or whether the prolonged exposure to online teaching only might negatively impact learners' overall knowledge of the subject. There have been several studies dedicated to answering this question and the results vary.

According to Shelia Tucker (2001), there is virtually no difference in the effectiveness of these two types of education. Tucker studied a total of 47 students, divided into two groups. Both groups were to study the same subject matter with the same instructor, the only difference being that one of the groups attended classes online and the other group had face-to-face classes at school. After testing both of these groups, Tucker did not see large differences between them and concluded that distance education can potentially be as effective as traditional education.

A meta-analysis performed by Mickey Shachar (2003) from Touro University which compared the results of students taught in the traditional manner with those taught by the use of e-learning was even more favourable to distance education. The results of his analysis conclude that out of a total of 86 studies involved, 66 % of them resulted in favour of distance education. Therefore, he states that objectively distance education outperforms traditional classroom education.

On the other hand, a study conducted by Noriko Hara and Rob Kling (2001), which focused mainly on students' perspective and view of distance education showed that due to elevated levels of frustration and stress learners in question were unable to perform as well when participating in an online course as they would if taught in a physical classroom. Several students from the study dropped the course or were not able to finish it.

Despite the fact that distance education is a very popular topic especially these days, even the experts do not agree on its effectiveness compared to traditional learning. On the

other hand, it is possible that a unanimous decision cannot be reached as the individual students vary when it comes to personality types or preferred learning styles.

1.4 Passive voice

The formation of the passive voice differs in Czech and English. Moreover, the context in which the passive voice can be used in Czech and in English is not the same. As a result of these differences, the correct usage of this voice in English can prove difficult to Czech learners (Babická, 2008).

1.4.1 Passive voice in Czech

The Czech language has two ways of forming sentences in the passive voice. The first of these options is the so-called reflexive passive, where the reflexive form of the verb is used, e.g. *Tento program se vysílá denně*. This form of passive is limited only to the third person, both singular and plural, as in the first and second person the pronoun *se* can only have the meaning of a reflexive pronoun (Babická; 2008).

The second way of forming passive sentences in Czech is periphrastically by using an auxiliary verb to be. This formation is equivalent to the way English forms passive sentences, e.g. *Dům byl postaven v roce 1896* (Babická; 2008).

It is important to note that in Czech only the direct object of an active sentence can become the subject of the passive one. That way, we can change the sentence *Kamarád mi poslal dopis* to *Byl mi poslán dopis od kamaráda*, however it would not be possible to transform the indirect object to the subject (Babická, 2008)

In Czech, the passive voice is used less frequently than in English due to the fact that Czech has a more flexible word order. As a result of that, Czech employs passive only in cases, when it is necessary or desirable to remove the agent from the centre of focus in favour of the recipient of the action. When using the passive, the agent is expressed by the genitive case or by the instrumental case after the preposition *od* (Dušková; 1988)

1.4.2 Passive voice in English

As mentioned above, the passive voice is a grammatical tool that is used more frequently in English than in Czech. Not only is it a way to avoid mentioning the agent of the activity spoken about, but it also has a grammatical function. Due to the fact that English does not tend to conjugate verbs or decline nouns and adjectives, the word order of a sentence is more important than it is in Czech. For that reason, the passivization of a sentence may be one of the ways to put an emphasis on a certain part of an utterance, as it is not possible to move the parts freely.

The way English forms passive sentences is equivalent to the periphrastic way in Czech; the auxiliary verb 'to be' is used with the past participle of the lexical verb. English does not have a reflexive passive as Czech does, which means that all sentences in passive must be formed in this manner (Babická, 2008). In this manner, it can be called a positive transfer (Zobl, 1980).

Moreover, there is a difference in what can become the subject of the passive phrase. In English, both direct and indirect objects of an active phrase can become the subject of the passive one, so in effect, we can transform the active sentence *My friend gave me a present* into the passive voice in two different ways – *I was given a present by my friend* and *A present was given to me by my friend* (Dušková, 1988). According to Zobl's typology, these differences would be labelled as negative transfer, as

1.4.3 Possible difficulties in English passive voice for Czech learners

Due to the fact that English is an analytical language and Czech is an inflectional one, English has a much more fixed word order. As a result of that, the passive voice in English can be not only a means of omitting the agent of the sentence but also a way to emphasize certain points and to change communicative dynamism. For that reason, English uses the passive voice more frequently than Czech (Dušková, 1988).

Sentences in passive might seem to learners with different native languages as something very formal or suitable only for academic purposes. For that reason, Czech learners of English tend to avoid using passive structures in English and convey the message

in another way. Consequently, the learner's speech might sound less natural to a native speaker of English (Aitken, 2003).

According to Aitken, problems in using passive structures may also arise because learners feel uncomfortable using past participle forms for present meaning and sometimes might mistakenly use the present participle instead. As a result of that, sentences such as *I am boring* instead of, *I am bored* might be formed by students.

Another error occurs when learners try to form passive structures with verbs that do not tend to take that structure and for which it would be meaningless to take it. For example, they might try to form sentences such as *He was died*. Other mistakes and errors might arise from the incorrect usage of irregular verbs, direct translations of reflexive passive structures from Czech to English (Aitken, 2003).

As mentioned above, forming of the passive voice in English is not identical to its forming in Czech, specifically the possibility of turning the indirect object of a ditransitive sentence into the subject of its passive counterpart does not exist at all in Czech. For that reason, this can be another area in which Czech students of English may make mistakes. While transforming the direct object of an active sentence into the subject of the passive one is a simple operation, marked as Level 0 or Transfer in Prator's hierarchy of difficulty, the subjectivization of an indirect object would be categorized as Level 5 or Overdifferentiation (Prator, 1967). The difference in difficulty is large and it can therefore be expected that this part of the English passive voice might cause problems to the Czech learners too.

Such difficulties might be also labelled as a negative transfer in Zobl's (1980) theory of transfer. On the other hand, as mentioned above, one part of the English passive voice grammar is practically identical to its counterpart in Czech, that is, the periphrastic way of forming the passive voice with the verb 'to be,' and this part of grammar could therefore be called positive transfer according to Zobl (1980).

2 EMPIRICAL PART

2.1 Outline

The empirical part of this master's thesis is based on comparing the results of two short tests on forming the passive voice and an interview with a number of students about their view on distance education in general. The tests were taken by two groups of 15 students before and after attending two online lessons focused on the explanation and practice of this grammar item and the interviews were subsequently exploring the participants' opinions both on the two specific lessons and on distance education in general. The goal is to measure whether there is progress in the ability of students to distinguish in which contexts to use the passive voice and their ability to form it correctly after having studied it in the distance environment, and to find out whether the students themselves consider distance education to be an effective alternative for face-to-face education.

Firstly, the thesis will describe in detail the students and the conditions in which the research was done, including a thorough description of the two online lessons. It will describe the activities used in the lessons, explain why such activities were chosen, and reflect back on the lessons.

Secondly, the thesis will focus on the results obtained by comparing a short test the students had taken before the two online classes to a post-test after having attended them. The results will show if there is any measurable progress in the students' ability to distinguish between active and passive sentences and to make a correct form of the passive voice.

Thirdly, the thesis will present an interview with several students of the group, in which their view on the two online lessons on the passive voice, as well as the measured progress of the group, will be discussed. The students will also be asked to give their subjective opinion on distance education in general and whether they consider it to be an adequate alternative to face-to-face education.

2.2 Description of research

The research was conducted on two groups of students who were taught two online classes focused on the explanation and practice of the English passive voice. The students were first given a short pre-test so that their initial level of understanding of the subject matter could be tested. Subsequently, two online lessons took place, in which the grammar was thoroughly explained and practised in various ways. As a final step, the students took a second test consisting of the same number of questions of the same type and very similar content, in order to measure the anticipated improvement of their knowledge.

2.2.1 Participants of research

The research involved 30 participants. The participants were two groups of students of Gymnázium pod Svatou Horou in Příbram. The groups of students were of the same age, between 16 and 17 years old, and they attended the penultimate year of the institution. Their level of English was roughly B1/B1+, as judged from the textbook the class used and as declared by the teacher based on the initial placement process, although some of the students' level of English seemed even higher. These variables were isolated: both of the groups were taught by the same teacher at a very similar pace and used the same textbook and study materials. Investigating the effects in two different experimental groups satisfies the criterion of data triangulation and therefore contributes to the reliability of the measurement.

All the participants had previous knowledge of the grammar item. According to their teacher, they had been taught the basics of the passive voice approximately a year before the research took place. The teacher explained that the students had covered only the basic use of the passive voice in the present tense, and that they had not spent a large amount of time focusing on this grammar.

2.2.2 Description of lessons

Both of the lessons took place on the MS Teams platform. Due to possible instability of internet connection, both the students and the teacher had to have their cameras turned off, for that reason the communication between the participants of the lessons was purely verbal, without the possibility to be supplemented non-verbally. According to Caroline Haythornthwaite's categorization of communication as described in chapter 1.1.5, the communication in the two lessons can be predominantly labelled as content-related, a smaller part of it being the planning of tasks.

Each of the two lesson plans was designed for a group of approximately 15 students and both of them were taught in two groups. The lesson plan was exactly the same for both of the groups even in cases when a minor problem in the plan was encountered during the first lesson, in order for both groups to have identical conditions.

The lessons were conducted in a synchronous manner and fulfilled the four elements that define distance education as proposed by Simonson, Smaldino and Zvacek (2015), as described in chapter 1.1. Although asynchronous education was also used in English classes at the school in question, it was not the case in the two lessons subject to this research.

As for the materials used, the main source was the students' textbook complemented with a presentation explaining the grammar of the passive voice and some additional activities created by the teacher. As the platform used allows for breaking the students into smaller groups, group work or pair work were used frequently during the lessons in order to ensure that the students were as active in their participation as possible.

Lesson 1

<i>Class/group</i>	5.A	<i>Textbook</i>	Gateway to Maturita B1+		
<i>Level and number of learners/class profile</i>	approx. 15, B1				
<i>Main aim(s)</i>	<p>The students will form sentences in the passive voice.</p> <p>The students will convert active sentences into active ones.</p> <p>The students will name the differences between the passive and active voices.</p>				
<i>Subsidiary aims</i>	The students will practise reading large numbers.				
<i>Anticipated problems</i>	The students might not understand as easily, the activities might take shorter or longer than expected.				
<i>Possible solutions</i>	To be prepared to explain again, to have a backup plan/assign some of the exercises as homework.				
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>		<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
5'	Pre-test on passive		To find out students' knowledge	Test	Individual work
5'	Stage 1: The ss match inventions with the date they were invented.		To introduce passive structures	Presentation (fig. 1)	Discussion
10'	Stage 2: The T elicits and explains the grammar of the passive voice.		To elicit and explain the passive voice	Presentation (fig. 2, 3, 4)	
5'	Stage 3: The ss fill in an exercise focusing on		To check understanding	Presentation (fig. 5)	Pair work.

	recognizing the passive voice in sentences.			
10'	Stage 3: Exercise 4	To check understanding	Presentation (fig. 6)	Pairwork
5'	Stage 3: The T checks the answers with the ss.		Presentation (fig. 6)	
5'	Stage 3: The ss fill in a gap-fill exercise		https://www.englisch-hilfen.de/ (fig. 7)	Individual work

Figure 1 – Lesson plan 1

Analysis of Lesson 1

The first lesson on the passive voice was an introductory one, meant to activate the students' previous knowledge of the topic and the grammar, as they had touched on the subject before. At the beginning of the lesson, the students were given the pre-test to fill in. The test was intentionally given to them before any explanation or practice of the grammar so that the students would not be affected, and the results were as accurate as possible.

In the second activity, the topic of human inventions was introduced. The topic of inventions was chosen to match the topic of the unit from the students' textbook dealing with the passive voice, as several activities from the textbook were incorporated in the lesson as well and choosing a similar topic made the lesson more coherent. In the warm-up activity, the students were shown several pictures of human inventions (fig.2) and were asked to match them to the years in which they thought the items were invented. The students were specifically asked to notice and use the passive structure. This activity was initially meant to

be a pair/group activity, as it would provide the opportunity for more students to participate and be active. However, in the environment of the online classroom, it would be impossible to monitor the groups and correct their mistakes, which might prove counterproductive. That is why this interaction pattern was selected.

When were they invented?

1998, 1876, 1903, 1st century AD, 6th century AD, 1498



Figure 2 – Slide 1 of presentation

In the following activity, the students were shown the structure of passive sentences and using the example of the invention of Google, they were asked to complete several sentences in the passive voice with the simple past tense, progressive present and future structure using *will* (fig. 3, 4, 5) and so the forming of passive sentences was elicited. Again, unfortunately, it was not possible for the whole class to participate in this activity due to the online environment, and it seemed more appropriate to keep the class together during the explanation and not separate them into smaller units.

2020

Google was invented 22 years ago.

Subject+ be + past participle




Figure 3 – Slide 2 of presentation

1998

Google ???? ???? now.

Subject+ be+ past participle



Figure 4 – Slide 3 of presentation

Larry Page and Sergey Grin invented Google.

Google was invented by Larry Page and Sergey Grin.

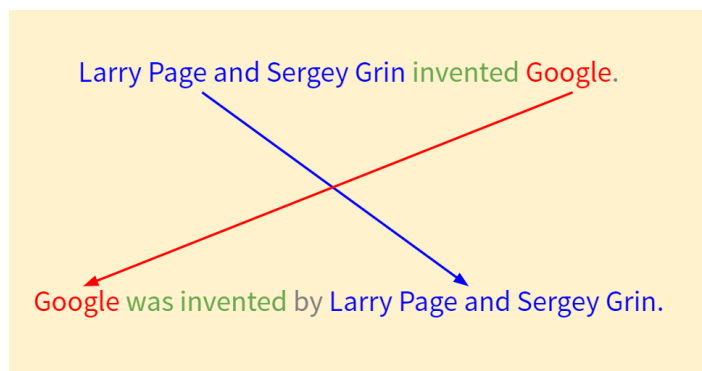


Figure 5 – Slide 8 of presentation

The following activity was adopted from the textbook the students were using and was intended to confirm that the students understood the grammar and were able to identify passive structures (fig. 6). In this activity the students were not asked to form sentences on their own yet, only to distinguish between active and passive ones. The students were divided into pairs for a few minutes, they were asked to identify which of the given sentences are in the passive voice and to write their answers to the teacher via private messages in Teams. That way it was possible to monitor whether there were any problems with the students' understanding. This activity was followed by feedback to the students' answers and by presenting the correct results. This activity lasted longer than expected, as a result of which it was not possible to finish all the planned activities, and the gap-fill activity was later assigned as homework.

- 1 The prizes are given to scientists.
- 2 An Ig Nobel prize was won by two Japanese scientists.
- 3 Johan Pettersson won the Chemistry Ig Nobel prize.
- 4 These inventions won't be used much.
- 5 Lots of interesting research is being done at the moment.
- 6 Their machine has been taken.

Figure 6 – Exercise, Gateway to Maturita B1+, pg. 72/1a

The last activity conducted in the lesson was focused on a controlled practice of the students (fig. 7). The students were given eight sentences in the active voice, which had also been adopted from the textbook, and were asked to use their newly acquired knowledge and in pairs to convert these sentences into passive ones in such a way that the meaning would stay unchanged.

Change these sentences from active to passive.

- 1 Alfred Nobel invented dynamite in 1867.
- 2 They gave the first Nobel prizes in 1901.
- 3 The Hurley Machine Company of Chicago produced the first electric-powered washing machine in 1908.
- 4 People have used this invention since 1908.
- 5 People are using this invention right now.
- 6 Perhaps people won't use electricity in the future.
- 7 Joseph Niépce took the first photo in 1826.
- 8 People take lots of photos on holidays.

Figure 7 – Exercise, Gateway to Maturita B1+, pg. 72/4

Unfortunately, due to time constraints and because the previous activities took longer than anticipated, the gap-filling exercise (fig. 8) could not be done in the lesson but was assigned as homework instead. This activity was another form of controlled practice and was meant to deepen the students' understanding of the grammar further, as well as have them practise the passive voice in different tenses. As the exercise was self-evaluative and the students could verify their answers as soon as they submitted them, it was suitable for self-practice as well. The students were asked to fill in the gaps with the passive form of the given verb in the given tense, to take a snapshot of their results and to send the picture to the teacher via a private message. Individual feedback was then provided to the students and this activity was further reflected at the beginning of the following lesson.

- 1 The words by the teacher today. *(to explain - Simple Present)*
- 2 We a letter the day before yesterday. *(to send - Simple Past)*
- 3 This car . It's too old. *(not/to steal - will-future)*
- 4 This street because of snow. *(already/to close - Present Perfect)*
- 5 A new restaurant next week. *(to open - will-future)*
- 6 He to the party yesterday. *(to invite - Simple Past)*
- 7 The blue box . *(can/not/to see - Simple Present)*
- 8 I the book by my friend last Sunday. *(to give - Simple Past)*
- 9 The dishes by my little brother. *(not/to wash - Present Perfect)*
- 10 I by Robert. *(not/to ask - will-future)*

Figure 8 – Gap-fill exercise, adopted from <https://www.englisch-hilfen.de/>

Reflection on Lesson 1

The lesson was divided into several stages. The pre-test is not considered one of them as it was not formally a part of the teaching and will therefore be excluded from the reflection.

The first stage was intended as an introduction to the topic and was meant to activate the students' previous knowledge of the grammar item. As mentioned above, due to the online format of the lesson it was not possible for all the students to participate actively in the warm-up activity, however, the intention was to have as many students answer or otherwise participate as possible. No problem appeared during the stage in either group, it seemed that the students understood the instructions given without any obvious trouble. The activity ran smoothly, and the timing assigned to it was accurate.

The second stage was the core of the lesson and in it, the grammar was presented to the students. The grammar was explained inductively and was for the most part elicited from the students, relying on their previous knowledge and visual aids provided in the presentation. Once again, it was not possible to realize this stage in a more interactive way, as it was essential that all the students be monitored by the teacher and that the teacher have

full control over the classroom should any problems or questions arise. It was stressed that as many students participate as possible, as it would not be beneficial for the classroom if only one or two students were active. The students had no problem answering the teacher's questions and the eliciting of the grammar went without problems. At the end of this activity, the students had several questions regarding the tenses which had not been mentioned in the presentation yet, which led to further possibilities for elicitation.

Stage three focused on practising the students' newly activated and acquired knowledge by various types of exercise. The first activity of this stage was not yet focused on the students' production, in order for them to first consolidate their understanding of the passive voice. With the purpose of lowering the teacher talking time and having all the students partake in the activity, the students were divided into pairs for this exercise. During the time they were monitored by the teacher and they seemed to have understood the instructions given very well. After having completed the activity, the students sent their answers to the teacher and the results were discussed by the whole class. As mentioned above, the pair work took approximately twice as long as previously anticipated, as a consequence of which there was not enough time to realize the entire lesson plan in a synchronous way in either of the groups.

The following activity, on the other hand, went as expected, including the timing. The students did not encounter any major problems when working on this exercise and working in pairs made their work easier. The majority of the small groups had zero to one mistake in their passive sentences and no misunderstanding occurred during the students' work.

As for the gap-fill exercise which was assigned as homework, there did not seem to occur any issue either. The majority of the results the students sent were correct, occasional mistakes were mostly in the sentences using present perfect, which had been only briefly mentioned in the explanation in the presentation but had not been included in any of the previous practice activities, so it seems natural that the students might at first struggle. Each of the students got individual feedback on their results, in which, if needed, the structure was explained again. The homework activity was reflected at the beginning of the following lesson as well and the students had the chance to ask any questions.

Lesson 2

<i>Class/group</i>	5.A	<i>Textbook</i>	Gateway to Maturita B1+		
<i>Level and number of learners/class profile</i>	Approx. 15, b1				
<i>Main aim(s)</i>	<p>The students will form sentences in the passive voice.</p> <p>The students will spot passive sentences in the text and explain why passive is used in them.</p>				
<i>Subsidiary aims</i>	The students will practise reading comprehension.				
<i>Anticipated problems</i>	The students might not understand as easily, the activities might take shorter or longer than expected.				
<i>Possible solutions</i>	To be prepared to explain again, to have a backup plan/assign some of the exercises as a homework.				
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>		<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
5'	Stage 1: Passive revision – The T elicits what the students remember from the last lesson about the passive voice.		To remind the students of the grammar	None	
5'	Stage 1: The ss answer questions: <i>Has anything ever been stolen from you? What were you given last Christmas? Do you like being photographed? Will you be</i>		To remind the students of the grammar	None	Pair/group work

	<i>asked to help with cleaning before Christmas?</i>			
15'	Stage 2: Ss read the first paragraph of the text and discuss what the text will be about. They work in pairs, each pair reads one paragraph, they make sure that they understand. They also look for examples of the passive voice.	To read, revise grammar	SB 71	Pairwork
10'	Stage 2: The pairs summarise their paragraphs to the whole group, while listening to other pairs they fill in exercise 3.	To read	SB 71	
10'	Stage 3: The ss transform sentences to active to see if they still make sense, they explain why passive is used.	To grammar	Presentation	Group work

Figure 9 – Lesson plan 2

Analysis of Lesson 2

The second lesson was focused on the revision of the passive voice grammar and its practice. Both groups of students had one free day between the two lessons. At the beginning of the second lesson, the basic overview of the grammar was elicited from the students, the homework from the previous lesson was reflected and the students received collective feedback to it apart from the individual feedback they had received upon sending the completed exercise to the teacher. Not all the students were able to participate in the eliciting

due to the high number of students in the class, however, as many students were asked a question as possible.

The second activity was a semi-controlled speaking exercise in groups. The students received questions for discussion and were divided into groups to answer them. They were encouraged to answer them using full sentences with passive structures and to make some of their own passive questions as well. The teacher monitored the groups. After the students had returned to the main room, they shared the questions which they had come up with and other students responded.

Stage two was based on reading and working with a text adapted from the textbook. At first, the students had one minute to read the first paragraph of the text (fig. 10), they were asked to predict what the text would be about and to find examples of the passive voice in the introduction. After that, the students were divided into pairs or groups. Each group was told to read one paragraph of the text (fig. 11), find all examples of the passive voice in it, and prepare a summary of the paragraph to present to the other groups in such a way that each student would be involved.

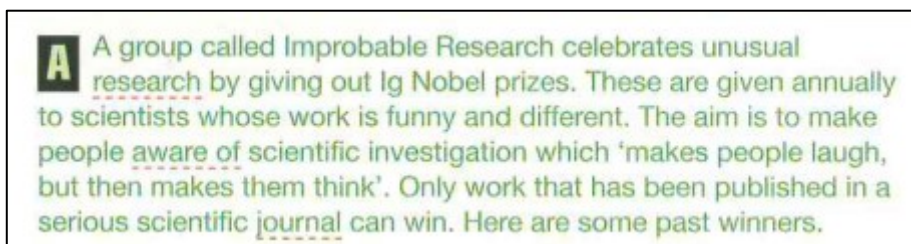


Figure 10 – Text, Gateway to Maturita B1+, pg. 71

Having discussed the matter in the groups, the students returned to the main room and one by one summarized their paragraphs for the whole class and presented the examples of the passive voice that they had found. While one group was speaking, the other students had been instructed to complete exercise 3 (fig. 9). The students then shared their answers.

Stage three was focused on the situations in which the passive voice is used and the reasons why the producer might choose to use it instead of an active structure (fig. 12). The students were asked to write in the chat all the passive sentences from the text they had read, in groups to find out whether the sentences could be transformed into the active voice, and

to think what might be the reason the author of the article had decided to phrase them in this way. After returning to the main room the students shared their answers and the teacher then summarized their ideas and explained once again the possible reasons for choosing to use a passive structure instead of an active one.

B In 2012 an Ig Nobel prize was won by Kazutaka Kurihara and Koji Tsukada. They created a machine called the SpeechJammer. The device stops people talking when you don't want to listen to them. It records the person's voice with a microphone. Just a few milliseconds later, you press a button and it plays back the recording through a speaker. When you hear yourself in this way it becomes very difficult, confusing and stressful to continue talking ... so you stop. The machine works at a distance of up to 30 metres.

C Johan Pettersson won the Chemistry Ig Nobel prize in 2012. He helped the people of Anderslov in Sweden with an unusual problem. Some people in the town found that when they washed their hair, it turned green. Originally people thought that there was probably some copper in the drinking water. But the water was analysed before it reached people's houses and it was found to be normal. However, when hot water came out of the taps in the morning, for example in the shower, they found lots of copper. The problem came from hot water reacting with copper in the pipes. So now people in the town have to wash their hair in cold water!



D Lots of interesting research is being done by psychologists at the moment. One Ig Nobel prize was given to a team of psychologists who discovered that if you move your head slightly to the left, the Eiffel Tower seems smaller! When we write numbers in order, we begin with small numbers on the left and they get bigger when they go to the right. The psychologists were interested in seeing if the way that we see numbers in our mind would make a difference to calculating size and height. Their experiment showed they were right. When you move your head slightly to the left, things seem smaller because we begin with small numbers on the left.



E Catherine Douglas and Peter Rowlinson of Newcastle University won an Ig Nobel prize for a research project which involved cows. They discovered that cows that have names produce significantly more milk than cows that don't have names. It seems that cows feel happier and more relaxed when they are given individual attention. And when they are happier and more relaxed, they produce more milk.

F Other Ig Nobel prizes have been won by inventions. Eduardo Segura from Spain won a prize for inventing a washing machine for cats and dogs. Simply insert your pet, select a function, and you're ready for action! An automatic translation device called Bow-Lingual also won a prize. Switch it on and you can understand what your dog is 'saying'. It's true that these inventions probably won't be used much in the future. But, like all the Ig Nobel prize winners, they certainly make you laugh ... and then think.



Figure 11 - Text, Gateway to Maturita B1+, pg. 71

3 Which paragraph (A–F) tells us about ...

- 1 the philosophy behind the Ig Nobel prizes?
- 2 a discovery that is explained by the way we see numbers in our mind?
- 3 an invention that makes it hard to do something that is usually simple?
- 4 a domestic problem in a particular place in the world?
- 5 something that allows animals to talk to humans?
- 6 how to win an Ig Nobel prize?
- 7 a physical action that can make you think differently?
- 8 a discovery that could be very important for farmers?

Figure 12 – Exercise, Gateway to Maturita B1+, pg. 71/3

Reflection on Lesson 2

In general, the lesson went very well in both groups, the students were active and participated, the instructions seemed to be clear as no problems arose concerning the students' understanding, and the anticipated timing was accurate. The students seemed to be interested in the topic as they participated in the discussion very actively without the need to be called by name.

The lead-in and the revision of the grammar were very fast, and the students quickly remembered the subject matter from the previous lesson. That was probably partially due to the fact that they were able to connect it to the practical examples from the homework on which they were receiving feedback. The grammar overview was elicited correctly and without any difficulties. Due to the nature of the activity, not all the students were able to share their ideas and contribute to the discussion, however, most of the students were included in the discussion or asked a question.

The second activity of the warm-up stage was focused on the students' own experience in order for the students to realize that passive structures can be used in very ordinary situations as well. The students seemed to enjoy the activity, some of the groups were in the middle of a heated discussion when the teacher entered the breakout room. The groups then

used the questions they were given as model sentences for their own questions, and only minor mistakes occurred in this exercise.

The main activity of this lesson was focused on reading and summarizing the rest of the text about Ig Nobel Prizes. Despite the fact that the instructions were more complex, and the students were asked to do several things at once, very few problems and misunderstandings occurred. As the number of students in both classes was odd, the class was divided into pairs and one group of three, as a result of which the students in the group had less work to do, and for that reason, the group was asked more subsequent questions. All the groups managed to read and summarize the text and to find examples of the passive voice in it. The comprehension exercise proved to be more difficult for the class, especially considering the fact that not all students managed to mention all the important points in their summary. However, in the end, the class managed to reach a consensus regarding the correct answers.

In the final activity, the students were supposed to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the passive voice. This activity was going slower than expected and, as a consequence, was a little rushed towards the end. The students took quite a long time writing the example sentences in the chat, and, in retrospect, it would have been better to have them write the sentences during the main stage. They were also not very active during the part when the teacher elicited whether the sentences made sense in the active voice as well or not, which might be due to their shyness. In the end, they had to be called by name to answer, which once again slowed the activity down. The final two sentences were read by the teacher due to time constraints.

2.2.3 Pre-test

Before learning about the passive voice, the students were given a pre-test to complete in order for their initial knowledge to be tested. The test was assigned by means of Microsoft Forms and included 8 multiple-choice questions and 8 gap-fill questions focusing on forming the passive voice in past, present and future sentences, and on distinguishing whether the active or the passive voice should be used. At the end of the test, the students were asked two questions on their own perception of how well they understood the grammar. The students were specifically notified beforehand that they were not going to be graded for the

test, that their answers would serve only for the purpose of this diploma thesis and that their answers would be anonymous. They were asked to try to answer all the questions, even if they were not certain with the answer or they did not know.

This format was chosen after a thorough consultation with the students' teacher due to the fact that according to her, the students would have very little initial knowledge of the grammar item and assigning a longer test would therefore be pointless. The students were given five minutes at the beginning of the first lesson to complete the test and were told that the usage and formation of the passive voice of past, present, and future tenses were tested, with the exclusion of the perfect tenses. The average time it took the students to submit their answers was four minutes and 20 seconds.

When assessing the students' responses, it was found that in the gap-fill questions some of the students responded in a way that was not anticipated but was not grammatically incorrect, for example using a verb form in the perfect aspect, although the students had been notified that these forms were not being tested. Such responses were consequently marked as correct and appear as such in all graphs and percentual evaluations of the students' performance. Essentially, all the submitted answers which might be potentially correct under certain circumstances were evaluated and taken as correct, including those in opposition with the instruction that the perfect aspect was not being tested. Only the sentences with clear grammatical deficiencies in tense, voice, aspect, and/or the form of the past participle were marked as incorrect. Typos were also evaluated as incorrect answers, as it was impossible to distinguish whether they were an unintentional typo or an error.

Test questions

- 1) Many theatre plays _____ by Shakespeare.
 - a) wrote
 - b) were written
 - c) was wrote
 - d) writing

- 2) My house _____ at the moment.
- a) is building
 - b) is being built
 - c) built
 - d) build
- 3) I _____ a present by my sister.
- a) gave
 - b) am giving
 - c) was given
 - d) was gave
- 4) My brother _____ dinner yesterday.
- a) was made
 - b) is making
 - c) made
 - d) makes
- 5) Many corrections _____ in the text.
- a) will make
 - b) will making
 - c) will be made
 - d) will be making
- 6) These changes _____ our lives.
- a) will be improved
 - b) will improve
 - c) will improving
 - d) improving
- 7) He _____ right now.
- a) is sleeping
 - b) am being slept
 - c) sleeps
 - d) was slept

- 8) The window _____ yesterday.
- a) breaking
 - b) broked
 - c) was broken
 - d) were breaking
- 9) The show _____ (watch) by millions of people every day.
- 10) He _____ (watch) the news every weekend
- 11) My car _____ (steal) yesterday
- 12) The book _____ (write) by Stephen King
- 13) The church _____ (reconstruct) 20 years ago
- 14) I _____ (read) an interesting article at the moment
- 15) Potato salad _____ (eat) on Christmas
- 16) The sun _____ (shine) tomorrow

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest), how well do you understand the passive voice?

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest), how well can you use the passive voice?

Results of pre-test

The overall average score of the pre-test was 73,1 %. The results of the pre-test were better than expected, although mistakes frequently occurred, in the multiple-choice questions less than a quarter of the total answers were wrong, specifically 21,25 % (fig. 11). The gap-fill questions proved, as expected, to be more difficult for the students, however, the total percentage of wrong answers was less than a half, specifically 32,5 % (fig. 12.).

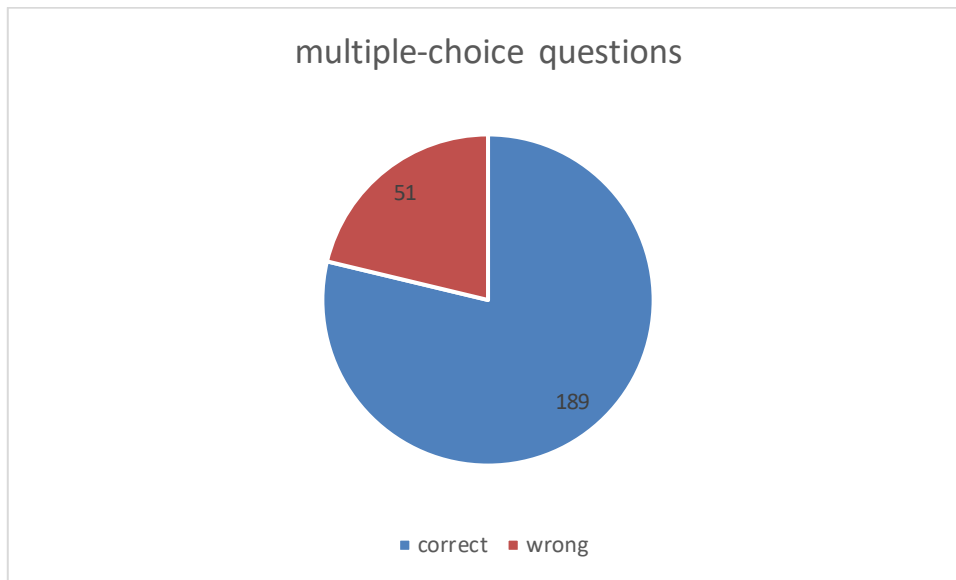


Figure 13 – Results of multiple-choice questions in pre-test

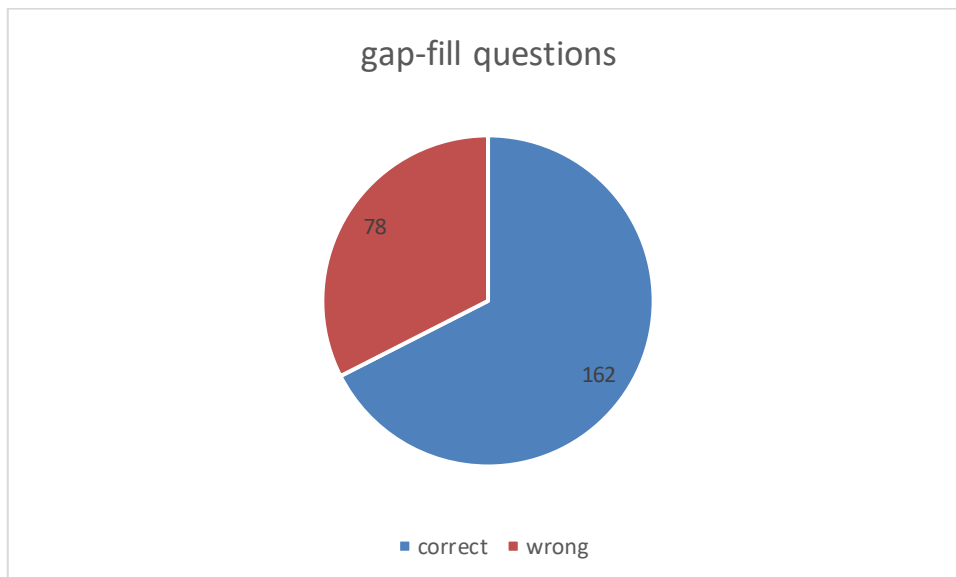


Figure 14 – Results of gap-fill questions in pre-test

As expected, in questions requiring the active voice (4, 6, 7, 10, 14 and 16) the students scored better on average than in questions requiring the passive voice. Specifically, 84,9 % of active sentences were answered correctly, while the average correctness of passive sentences was only 65,9 %. That was an expected result, as it had been presupposed that the

students would not have much experience with the passive voice, however, that they would be able to form active sentences without any obvious trouble. The majority of the wrong answers in the active sentences occurred due to the fact that the students were trying to use the passive voice in those as well and this can possibly be ascribed to the students' lack of attention to the question.

As mentioned, the students' knowledge was better than expected by the teacher, which demonstrates the benefits of the method of testing the students prior to teaching a new grammar item. That way, the students' pre-conceptual knowledge might be discovered, and the activities in the lessons might be better tailored to the students' needs.

Let us now take a closer look at the questions with the worst results. From the multiple-choice questions, the one with the worst result was question 4, with 36 % of wrong answers scoring almost 10 % worse than the overall average. On the second position with 30 % of wrong answers was question 8. From the gap-fill questions, question 11 received the worst result with 43 % of wrong answers, which is again approximately 10 % higher than the average.

Question 4 focuses on a specific usage of the passive voice in English as it makes the indirect object of the active sentence the subject of the passive one. As mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis in chapter 1.4.3, such usage is very common in English. However, it can be a common source of errors with Czech learners, as Czech does not use the passive voice in this way. In Prator's (1967) hierarchy of difficulty, this difference between Czech and English would be positioned on level 5 – Overdifferentiation. The fact that the students have scored the lowest in a question using this structure is therefore not surprising and was to be expected.

Question 8 and 11, however, are not the same case as question 4 and the difficulty was of a different kind. In question 8 all the students who answered incorrectly failed to recognize that the option *broked* is not grammatical and correct and marked it as the correct answer instead of an option in the passive voice. The students correctly recognized that the sentence could function very well in the active voice as well, but the options did not provide the correct form of the verb to fill it in as an active sentence and for that reason, the passive structure was required, and the test item tested their ability to realize that.

Exactly half of the wrong answers in question 11 were not wrong in the form or the tense of the passive structure, but in the form of the irregular verb *to steal*. Despite the fact that the majority of the questions required a correct form of an irregular verb, the verb *to steal* proved to be the most difficult one for the students, possibly due to the fact that it is not as common as the other verbs used in the rest of the questions.

Two other questions in the gap-fill section both received 40 % of wrong answers (9 and 15). Both of these questions required the passive voice in the present tense to be filled in and in both a large part of the wrong answers have been marked as wrong due to errors in aspect. Despite the fact that both of the questions were phrased in a manner that did not allow for another option, the students tended to make mistakes and use the continuous aspect when it was not required and vice versa.

In spite of the fact that, originally, question 15 was supposed to be completed by a verb in the present tense, 10 % of the students decided to complete the sentence with a verb in the past tense. That was originally not the expected answer, but it was marked as correct in the cases where there were no mistakes in the form of the past participle of the verb.

As for the two questions where the students were asked to evaluate their own understanding and the ability to use the passive voice, the results were slightly above average. In the question on how well the students understand the grammar of the passive voice, the average score was 3,1 out of five. The question on how well the students were able to form the passive voice, the average score was lower than that with 2,7 out of five, with 20 % of the students answering with the lowest score. In total, 16 % of the group responded with the lowest score to both of the comprehension questions. On the other hand, 8 % of the students answered both of the questions with the highest score.

Let us now look more closely at whether the students' evaluation of their comprehension and the ability to form and use the passive voice is justified. On average, the score of the students who responded with the lowest score to both of the questions asking for the students' comprehension was 64 %, which is approximately 10 % less than the overall average score of the whole class. However, the results in this group were not even. Two of the students in this group had an above-average result in the test, both of them scored 87,5 %. The rest of this group, however, had a very low result on the test and it seemed as if they had

never come in contact with the passive voice at all and their own perception of their comprehension was therefore accurate.

The group with the highest perception of their understanding had above-average results on their tests. Both of the students scored 93,75 % on the test, with only one mistake each. Neither of them had problems with forming the passive voice or with the correct forms of irregular verbs. One of the students failed to recognize that a sentence should be in the passive voice instead of the active one, the other student's mistake concerned a flaw in the tense, which seems to be a mistake that occurred due to the student's possible lack of attention. Both of the students' mistakes occurred in the gap-fill questions, their responses to the multiple-choice questions were flawless.

To conclude, the results of the pre-test were much better in general than was originally expected, but the differences between the individual questions were as anticipated. The most frequent mistakes occurred in the sentence where an indirect object is transformed into the subject of the passive sentence, and in the forms of past participles of irregular verbs. The students' own evaluation of their ability to form the passive voice is even lower than their real performance on the test, with 20 % of the students thinking that they are not able to form and use the passive voice at all.

2.2.4 Post-test

After having had the two lessons on the grammar of the passive voice described in one of the previous sections, the students were given a post-test. The post-test was mirroring the pre-test in the number and type of questions, including the focus on some specific usage of the passive voice in English, such as the structure where the subject of the passive sentence is the indirect object of the active one. The test was again assigned at the beginning of a lesson and the conditions were identical to those of the pre-test.

The students were instructed in the same way including the instruction that the students should only fill in forms in the past, present, and future tenses excluding the perfect aspect. As in the pre-test, they were assured beforehand that the test was not going to be graded, that it was anonymous and that their answers would only serve the purpose of this

diploma thesis. The students were again given 5 minutes to submit the answers to the test. This time, it took the students an average time of three minutes and 21 seconds to complete the test.

The evaluation of the tests had identical rules to the evaluation of the pre-test. All answers which were not grammatically deficient in any way and could potentially be used under certain circumstances were marked as correct, including the answers in the perfect aspect. Only answers with clear grammatical deficiencies in tense, voice, aspect, and/or the form of the past participle were considered to be incurred and are included as such in the final overall and partial results and graphs. Typos were also considered to be mistakes.

Test questions

- 1) Many books _____ by Jane Austen.
 - a. wrote
 - b. were written
 - c. were wrote
 - d. was written

- 2) A new church _____ at the moment.
 - a. is building
 - b. is being built
 - c. built
 - d. build

- 3) I _____ a gift by my friend.
 - a. gave
 - b. am giving
 - c. was given
 - d. was gave

- 4) My mother _____ breakfast yesterday.
- was made
 - is making
 - made
 - makes
- 5) Many changes _____ next year.
- will make
 - will making
 - will be made
 - will be making
- 6) These adaptations _____ our school.
- will be improved
 - will improve
 - will improving
 - improving
- 7) I _____ right now.
- am shopping
 - am being shopped
 - shop
 - was shopped
- 8) The kettle _____ last week.
- breaking
 - broked
 - was broken
 - was breaking
- 9) Netflix _____ (watch) by millions of people every day.
- 10) He _____ (watch) a movie every day.
- 11) My wallet _____ (steal) in November.
- 12) The film _____ (direct) by Christopher Nolan.
- 13) The restaurant _____ (reconstruct) a year ago.
- 14) I _____ (read) an interesting review at the moment.

15) Ice cream _____ (eat) in summer.

16) Snow _____ (fall) tomorrow.

On a scale 1-5 (1 being the lowest), how well do you understand the passive voice?

On a scale 1-5 (1 being the lowest), how well can you use the passive voice?

Results of post-test

In the post-test, a difference in results between the multiple-choice questions and the gap-fill questions can be observed as well as in the pre-test. In the multiple-choice questions, the students scored very well, with 91,75 % correct answers. The success rate in the gap-fill questions was lower, which was to be expected, and the students answered correctly in 85,75 % of the questions.

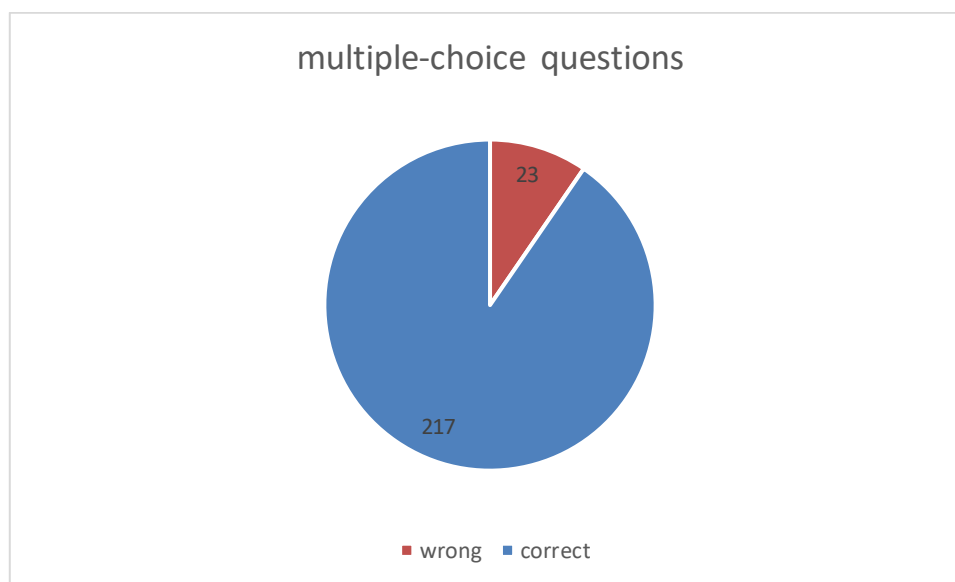


Figure 15 – Results of multiple-choice questions in post-test

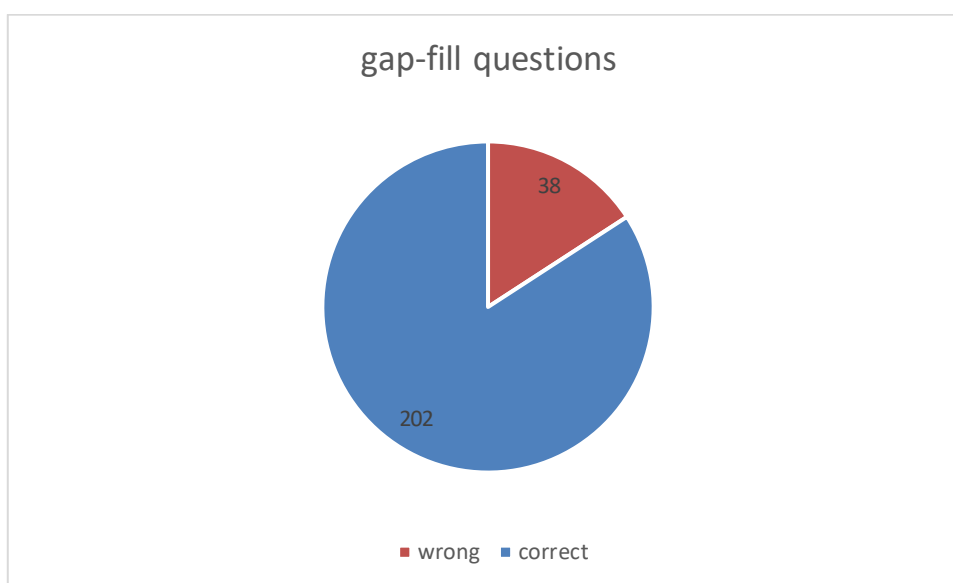


Figure 16 – Results of gap-fill questions in post-test

Very unexpectedly, neither in the multiple-choice questions nor in the gap-fill ones, sentences requiring the active voice were those with the most correct responses. In the multiple-choice questions, while one sentence (question 7) in the active voice received 97 % of correct responses, another one, question 6, ranked at the penultimate place with 85 % of correct responses. In the gap-fill questions, all the sentences requiring the active voice received 85 or 88 % of correct answers, none of them being the highest or lowest percentage.

On average, the success rate of the questions in the passive voice was 88 % in multiple-choice and the gap-fill questions together. The average success rate in the active sentences was 89,5 %, which means that the students on average scored better in the active sentences only by a margin of 1,5 %.

Let us now take a closer look at the specific questions which caused the students the most problems. In the multiple-choice part, what proved to be the most problematic for the students was question 8 with 82 % of correct answers. In this question, all the incorrect answers happened due to the students' failure to recognize the wrong past form of the verb *to break*. The students correctly recognized that the sentence could function very well in the active voice as well, but the options did not provide the correct form of the verb to fill it in as an active sentence and for that reason, the passive structure was required and the students

were supposed to recognize that. The errors did not occur due to the students' misunderstanding the grammar, but due to the fact that they did not remember properly the correct form of the irregular verb.

In the gap-fill questions, the question with the lowest success rate was question 9 with 30 % of incorrect answers. If we exclude the one student who did not fill in the question at all, all the other incorrect answers occurred due to errors in the aspect. 27 % of the students used the progressive aspect in the sentence despite the fact that the sentence was clearly phrased in a way that required the simple aspect. No students made a mistake in recognizing that the sentence required the passive voice in order to be grammatical, however, there were differences between the students in the tense used. Several students decided to fill in the verb in the past tense, one student even answered with a future structure. These answers, as they were not grammatically deficient in any way, were marked as correct.

At the end of the test, the students were again asked two questions about their own perception of how well they understood and were able to use the passive voice. On average, the students rated their understanding of the grammar item with a score of 3,8. Only 8 % of the students responded with the lowest score, while 27 % of them stated that they understood perfectly by answering with the highest score. In the question on how well the students think that they can use the passive voice, the average score was 3,5. As well as in the first question, the same 8 % of the class answered this question with the lowest score. The highest score was given by fewer students than in the previous question, as only 21 % of the students responded with a 5.

Let us now take a closer look at whether the students' perception of their understanding was justified. As stated above, 8 % of the students (2) responded in the post-test that they do not understand the passive voice at all, nor can they use it. However, such a rating was not entirely adequate. One of the students who stated that they do not understand the grammar did not perform very well on the test, with an overall score of 43,75 was well below the class average. As the student's answers are revised more closely, it can be seen that they had trouble not only with distinguishing in which sentences which voice should be used but also with the overall formation of the passive voice as well with the correct forms

of irregular verbs. As the answers were anonymous, it is not possible to learn more about this individual student to find out whether such a result in a test is a standard or not.

On the other hand, the other student's answering with the lowest score to both of the questions asking about the students' own perception of their understanding was not justified at all. This student's answers were 100% correct with no mistake whatsoever. The student proved to understand the difference between the active and the passive voice, was able to form the passive voice correctly and did not make any mistakes in the forms of irregular verbs. It is not possible to determine the reason why the student answered with the lowest score, it is possible that it could have occurred due to the student's low self-esteem or their wish to interfere with the accuracy of the overall results of the test. It would be beneficial to ask the student to explain their low scores, however, as stated above, the test was anonymous and, for that reason, it is impossible to do so.

As opposed to the students with the lowest scores, the group of the students who had answered with the highest score on both of the final questions was examined more closely. The group made up 21 % of the class, 7 students in total numbers. The average score of the students in this group was 93,25 % and 42,7 % of them received a perfect score on the test. It is important to note that a large percentage of the mistakes in this group of students were typos and the students probably knew the answers, however, due to the rules established prior to assigning the test, these answers had to be marked as incorrect.

To conclude, the results of the post-test were not unexpected, as the multiple-choice questions had better average results than the gap-fill questions. The students made mistakes primarily in distinguishing between an active and a passive sentence and in the forms of irregular verbs. What was interesting and unexpected was the small difference in average results between the active and passive sentences, which was no more than 1,5 %. The students' own evaluation of their understanding and ability to use the passive voice was justified with one exception.

2.2.5 Comparison of pre- and post- test

As stated above, both the pre-test and the post-test had identical forms. Both of the tests consisted of 8 multiple-choice questions, 8 gap-fill questions and 2 questions asking about the students' own evaluation of their understanding of the grammar and their perceived ability to form and use the passive voice. The tests also included an identical number of questions focusing on specific elements or forms. Each test had 6 questions that required the active voice to be completed and a question where the subject of the passive sentence was the indirect object of the active one. Both of the tests featured questions with both regular and irregular verbs, some of the irregular verbs were repeated in both of the tests. A majority of the questions in the post-test were similar to the questions in the pre-test (as seen in the table below), but there were no identical questions.

Pre-test	Post-test
<p>Many theatre plays _____ by Shakespeare.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. wrote 2. were written 3. was wrote 4. writing 	<p>Many books _____ by Jane Austen.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. wrote 2. were written 3. were wrote 4. was written
<p>My house _____ at the moment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. is building 2. is being built 3. built 4. build 	<p>A new church _____ at the moment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. is building 2. is being built 3. built 4. build
<p>I _____ a present by my sister.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gave 2. am giving 3. was given 4. was gave 	<p>I _____ a gift by my friend.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gave 2. am giving 3. was given 4. was gave

My brother _____ dinner yesterday. 1. was made 2. is making 3. made 4. makes	My mother _____ breakfast yesterday. 1. was made 2. is making 3. made 4. makes
Many corrections _____ in the text. a. will make b. will making c. will be made d. will be making	Many changes _____ next year. 1. will make 2. will making 3. will be made 4. will be making
These changes _____ our lives. 1. will be improved 2. will improve 3. will improving 4. improving	These adaptations _____ our school. 1. will be improved 2. will improve 3. will improving 4. improving
He _____ right now. 1. is sleeping 2. is being slept 3. sleeps 4. was slept	I _____ right now. 1. am shopping 2. am being shopped 3. shop 4. was shopped
The window _____ yesterday. 1. breaking 2. broked 3. was broken 4. were breaking	The kettle _____ last week. 1. breaking 2. broked 3. was broken 4. was breaking
The show _____ (watch) by millions of people every day.	Netflix _____ (watch) by millions of people every day.
He _____ (watch) the news every weekend	He _____ (watch) a movie every day.
My car _____ (steal) yesterday	My wallet _____ (steal) in November.
The book _____ (write) by Stephen King	The film _____ (direct) by Christopher Nolan.
The church _____ (reconstruct) 20 years ago	The restaurant _____ (reconstruct) a year ago.

I _____ (read) an interesting article at the moment	I _____ (read) an interesting review at the moment.
Potato salad _____ (eat) on Christmas	Ice cream _____ (eat) in summer.
The sun _____ (shine) tomorrow	Snow _____ (fall) tomorrow.

Figure 17 – Comparison of questions in pre-test and post-test

The instructions and the conditions for the students were also identical. Both of the tests were assigned at the beginning of a lesson, the students were given 5 minutes to complete the tests, they were notified that the tests were anonymous and that they would serve only for the purposes of this thesis. Before writing the tests, the students were instructed to complete the sentences with verbs in their past, present, or future forms with the exception of the perfect aspect.

Not only were the students not marked for their performance in the tests, but they were also not given feedback after completing the pre-test, as the sentences in the post-test were similar. Telling students the correct answers to the questions in the pre-test might potentially lead to the situation where the students would remember the correct answers without understanding the grammar and would therefore show a false improvement in the post-test results.

Fortunately, the majority of the students were present in both of the classes where the tests were assigned, those who were not were asked to fill in the pre- or post-test outside the lessons. Such difference may have altered the result, as the students may have been more prone to cheating on the test, however, they were also notified that the results were anonymous and without any consequence for them, and they were specifically asked not to consult any notes or the internet when completing the test.

The first difference in the results can be observed in the average time it took the students to complete the test. While in the pre-test the average time of completion was 4 minutes and 20 seconds, in the post-test the average time was approximately a minute shorter, only 3 minutes and 21 seconds. As the students regularly use Microsoft Forms to write tests with their teachers and are therefore familiar with the environment, it is improbable that such difference in the time occurred due to their inability to navigate during

the first test. The possibility that the students could have been less careful with their answers during the second test also seems improbable, as the overall results improved significantly. It is more probable that the students did not need that much time to think about their responses due to the fact that they had spent two lessons prior to the post-test dealing with similar sentences and also that they had become more familiar with the passive voice in general. Nevertheless, a difference of nearly one minute in a five-minute test is a large and significant and very probably marks the progress in the students' ability to recognise, form and use the passive voice.

Another significant difference can be seen in the overall results of the tests. While in the pre-test the average score was 73,1 %, in the post-test it was 88,75 %. The difference is large, a whole 15,65 %. Despite the fact that the results of the pre-test were better than previously expected, the gap between the two tests is significant and clearly visible. A difference can be seen in the two parts of the test as well. While in the pre-test the multiple-choice part had a success rate of 78,75, the average score in the multiple-choice questions in the post-test was much higher, a whole 91,75 %, with an increase of 13 %. In the gap-fill questions, the overall improvement is even higher and more clearly visible. In the pre-test, the result was 67,5 %, while in the post-test an increase of 18,25 % can be seen and the overall success rate is 85,75 %. Again, these differences clearly demonstrate the improvement in the students' knowledge and understanding of the passive voice.

It is important to also contrast the two independent groups of students to see whether both of them made a progress or not. Group 1 scored 71,25 % in the pre-test and 83,3 % in the post-test, with an improvement of 12,05 %. Group 2 completed the pre-test with an overall result of 72,9 % and scored 88,3 % in the post-test, the difference in this case being 15,4 %. It is obvious that both of the groups made a significant progress in their ability to form the passive voice, and despite the fact that there is a slight difference in the overall improvement of the two, it can be concluded that the results of the research are independent of time, place or group and is therefore reliable.

What is interesting is the gap between the multiple-choice questions and the gap-fill questions in the pre-test and the post-test, specifically its decreasing. While in the pre-test

the students' overall success rate in the multiple-choice questions was 11,25 % higher than in the gap-fill questions, in the post-test this difference is much smaller, only 6 %.

Another striking difference is in the difference in the success rate between the active sentences and the passive ones. While in the pre-test the difference was large and the active sentences had a success rate a whole 19 % higher than the passive ones, in the post-test the difference was minimal with only a 1,5 % of difference in favour of the active sentences. Such development signifies an important improvement in the students' ability to form the passive voice, however, together with the success rate of the passive sentences, an improvement can be seen in the average score of the active sentences as well by almost 5 %. From these data, it can be deduced that not only did the students improve their ability to form sentences in the passive voice but also that their ability to recognize which sentences should be in the active voice and which ones in the passive one increased as well. Fewer students responded to the questions requiring the active voice with a passive construction in the post-test, showing that they paid more attention to what the structure of the sentence should be.

Let us now take a closer look at the sentences which caused the students the most trouble. While in the pre-test the question focusing on the transformation of the indirect object into the subject proved the most problematic and received 36 % of incorrect answers, a similar sentence with this structure received only 6 % of incorrect answers in the post-test. The gap is large and demonstrates the improvement in the students' understanding of the difference between the possible use of the passive voice in English and in Czech.

In the pre-test, the majority of the mistakes occurred due to the students' lack of understanding of the form and use of the passive voice and their inability to distinguish between active and passive sentences. On the other hand, in the post-test, the main problem was the students' lack of knowledge of irregular verbs.

Furthermore, a significant difference can be observed in the students' own perception of their ability to form and use the passive voice. While in the pre-test the average score on the students' understanding was 3,1 out of five, five being the highest; in the post-test, the average score was higher by 0,7 points, or 14 %, and the question received a score of 3,8. The second question asking about the students' ability to not only understand but to use the

passive voice received a lower score in both the pre-test and the post-test, which was an expected result as it follows the theory that language comprehension is always ahead of language production of a person. The relative difference between the questions on understanding and the questions on the usage of the passive voice stayed practically the same in the pre-test and the post-test. In the pre-test, the students evaluated their understanding of the grammar item with an average score of 2,7, which is barely above the middle. In the post-test, the same question received an average score of 3,5; an average improvement of 0,8 points, or 16 %.

It is obvious that the progress in the students' results correlates with the students' own evaluation. While in the test results the overall improvement was 15,65 %, the students' perception of their understanding and ability to use the passive voice increased by 15 % on average.

Moreover, there is another tendency worth mentioning in connection with the two questions of the tests focusing on the students' own assessment of their abilities than the average scores, and that is the number of students answering with either the lowest or the highest possible score. A difference and a positive tendency can be clearly seen in those numbers as well. While in the pre-test a whole 16 % of students responded to both of the self-evaluative questions with the lowest score, in the post-test it was only 8 % of the students. It is important to keep in mind here that the percentage in the post-test might not wholly correspond to reality, as one of the students who assessed themselves with the lowest scores in both of the questions also scored a perfect score in the post-test and their self-evaluation might have been purposefully misleading. If that were the case, the real percentage of the lowest self-evaluations should be at most 4 %.

The difference between the pre-test and the post-test is even more significant if we take a look at the numbers of students with the highest possible self-assessment. While in the pre-test only 8 % of the participants answered both of the questions with a score of 5, in the post-test the total percentage amounted to 21 % of the students. In both the pre-test and the post-test the assessment seems appropriate to the students' results in the test, as in the pre-test and the post-test the students with the highest possible self-assessment received

93,75 % and 93,25 % respectively. The gap was again to be expected and the 13 % of the difference is a significant enough number to be taken into account.

2.2.6 Teacher's evaluation of test results

In order to put the objective results into context, the English teacher of the students was asked to provide her opinion on the students' progress and to evaluate whether the results were average, below-average, or above-average in the context of the two classes. The teacher received both the results of the pre-test and the post-test and was asked to answer four simple questions regarding the results. The questions were sent to the teacher via email and the answers were received in the same way.

The four questions were focused on the teacher's opinion about the results of the tests, the difference between the pre-test and the post-test and the subjective evaluation of the difficulty of the questions. The goal was to put the results of the test into the context of the general level of the class and to see whether the students' improvement over the two lessons was unexpected or not in the context of the classes' regular learning speed.

Teacher's answers

Question: Do you find the result of the pre-test below-average, average, or above-average?

Answer: The result of the pre-test is average. The students first encounter the passive voice in a B1 textbook, which precedes the textbook B1+ which was used during these classes. They are expected to be able to use the passive voice in present and past simple tenses at this point. Some of them are then able to logically form the passive in other tenses or have seen them on other occasions.

Question: Do you find the result of the post-test below-average, average, or above-average?

Answer: The result of the post-test clearly shows that the students are better able to form the passive voice in other tenses, but have trouble distinguishing between the passive and the active voice. I view this element as average, as it is the forming of the passive voice in the perfect tenses which proves to be difficult for the students later on. In general, the result of

the post-test is average and shows the students' improvement in the grammar that was practised.

Question: Do you view the progress of the students after the two online lessons as sufficient?

Answer: In my opinion, the students need more time to be able to use the passive voice correctly and to distinguish between passive and active sentences.

Question: Which of the test questions seem more difficult to you personally? Is that reflected in the test results?

Answer: Questions B and J (*A new church _____ at the moment; Netflix _____ (watch) by millions of people every day.*) seem to be more difficult than the rest. I am surprised that the students scored so low in question J, but I suppose they must have missed the specification of time in the sentence.

Reflection on teacher's evaluation

As seen in the teacher's answers, the results of the tests and the students' improvement in the practised grammar over the course of two online lessons seem to be typical in the context of the students' regular learning speed in online lessons. Both the results of the pre-test and the post-test, as well as the difference between the two, were labelled as average by the classes' teacher. The teacher then mentioned that in order for the students to be able to use the new grammar item actively, more practise would be needed, and that the most difficult part of the passive voice was the passive voice of the perfect tenses, which was not subject to testing.

The teacher also mentioned that the most difficult questions seemed to be the ones requiring the passive voice in the present tense, and she seemed surprised by the result. She offered an explanation that it was possible that the students had been distracted or had not paid enough attention to detail when filling in the test.

2.2.7 Conclusion to test results

After evaluating and comparing both the pre-test and the post-test, a clear improvement in the students' knowledge and understanding can be seen. It can be argued that the students' previous contact with the passive voice might have altered the results so that the overall improvement seems larger than if the grammar item was completely new to them and that the student did not learn it as much as only activated their passive knowledge of the grammar. However, even if that is the case, this argument does not contradict the fact that the students' results after two online lessons dealing with a certain grammar topic were better than the results before the lessons.

That in itself can serve as a proof that in spite of the fact that both of the lessons took place in a virtual environment, they did have an impact on the students' knowledge and understanding of the discussed grammar, and the students' overall results were by their regular teacher evaluated as average. The online education had a significantly positive impact on the added value of the education.

This outcome does not oppose the expected result; however, a further study might focus on comparing the lessons and tests discussed in this thesis to identical ones conducted in a physical classroom during a face-to-face education to see whether one of the types of education would have a larger impact on the students' knowledge. Unfortunately, it was not possible to conduct such a comparison for the purposes of this thesis due to the fact that it was not possible to teach face-to-face classes when the research was being conducted.

2.3 Reflection of participants

After finishing the teaching practice and the testing of the students, an interview with two of the students was conducted so as to learn about the participants' perspectives on the online form of education and their own progress. Two students who had attended both of the lessons in question and presumably completed both the pre-test as well as the post-test were selected for this interview, one from each class.

2.3.1 Description of interviews

As mentioned above, a short interview was conducted with one student from each class included in the research. Due to GDPR reasons, their names or any other personal information will not be provided. Both of the students were informed of the purpose of the interview and gave permission that the transcript of the interview be anonymously included in this thesis.

The interview was conducted to provide an insight into the students' own views on distance education in general as well as on the two lessons subjected to research. Mainly, it was supposed to show whether the students' perception of their progress in learning the passive voice in English correlated with the test results; that is, whether they themselves felt an improvement in their understanding of the grammar and their ability to apply it. Moreover, the interview was also expected to give insights on the students' opinions on online education in general and on whether they felt any difference from face-to-face classes.

In order for the results to be as relevant and as detailed as possible, it was essential that the interviews take place only a short time after the two lessons and the testing in question. Both of the interviews were scheduled within two weeks from the second lesson and fortunately, despite the pandemic, it was possible to conduct the interviews in person, as after consulting the respondents, this option seemed to be more comfortable for both of them. During the interviews, both the interviewer and the respondents followed all safety measures concerning the pandemic situation of COVID 19 recommended by the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic.

Due to the fact that the students' nationality is Czech, it seemed appropriate to conduct the interview in Czech, in spite of the fact that the topic of the interview concerned the grammar of English. In order for the respondents to feel more comfortable and in order for them to be able to give as detailed answers as possible without being distracted by the necessity to speak in a foreign language, it seemed to be a better option to use the students' native language. Both of the interviews were recorded and later transcribed and translated for the purposes of this thesis.

The interview itself may be divided into two parts. Not mentioning the beginning of the interview in which the students were informed of the purpose and the conditions of the

interview and were asked to give consent to being recorded, the interview consisted of nine questions in total. While the first four questions focused on the online form of education in general and the perceived differences between online education and face-to-face education, the other five questions were focused on reflecting the two lessons in question, the pre- and post-test and the students' reflection of their understanding of the covered grammar before and after the lessons. The abovementioned nine questions were identical for both of the students; however, the individual interviews may differ as it was needed at times to ask for clarification or completion of some of the answers.

Let us now take a closer look at the questions of the interview. As already stated, the first part of the interview focused on the students' view on online education in general. The questions were open, and the students were encouraged to give detailed answers and to mention anything which could be relevant to the topic. The students were asked which type of education they preferred and why, they were asked to present what they felt were the advantages and disadvantages of both types and to say whether they felt that online education, in general, was beneficial for their improvement. One question of the first part was specifically focused on the students' ability to concentrate during online lessons, as that was a topic frequently mentioned during the time of the research. The assumption before the interview was that the students would more or less agree that online education was not as beneficial for them as an in-person education and that classical education would also be their preferred option. As for the question on their ability to concentrate, it was assumed that they would evaluate it worse than during classical education.

All of these assumptions came from talking to the teachers at the school where the research was held, personal experience and the general atmosphere in the classes. However, it was not implied to the respondents prior to the interview what the assumption was, so as not to devalue their responses.

The second part of the short interview was focused on English lessons in general and more closely on the two lessons the students had participated in as a part of the research for this thesis and on the tests which they took before and after these lessons. The students were first asked whether they thought that online education was suitable for English lessons and were encouraged to explain their answers. Then they were asked to describe if they felt an

improvement in their ability to form and use the passive voice in English after participating in the two lessons dealing with it, and whether they felt the improvement would be more significant if the identical lessons were held in a classroom instead of a virtual environment.

As with the first set of questions, an assumption was made prior to interviewing the students. It was assumed that the students would respond negatively to the question of whether this type of education was suitable for English lessons. On the other hand, the students were expected to give a positive answer on whether they themselves perceived an improvement in their understanding of the covered grammar, though when asked to compare the online lessons to the hypothetical face-to-face ones, a preference of the classical lessons was presumed.

Again, these assumptions were based on personal experience, talking to the teachers and the results of the two tests. Similarly to the first part of the interview, it was not indicated to the respondents what the assumptions were.

2.3.2 Respondents of interviews

As stated above, two respondents were chosen to respond to the described questions. They were not chosen randomly, on the contrary, a set of conditions had to be met for the students to be selected.

In order to receive responses from both of the classes participating in the research, a respondent from each was chosen. While for the purposes of this thesis the two classes are thought of as one group in terms of measuring their progress, there were slight differences in the average level of the classes and may also have been alterations in the lessons as taught in each class. For those reasons, it seemed important to take into consideration the opinions of a representative of each class.

Another essential condition in the selection of the respondents was their attendance in both of the lessons involved in the research. The reasoning for this condition is obvious, as the respondents would not be able to answer the questions in the interview had they not been present in both of the lessons. Together with their attendance, it was presumed that both of the respondents had also completed both the pre-test and the post-test, however, as both

of the tests were anonymous it is impossible to confirm this assumption or to know which results the respondents had received in the tests.

Despite the fact that due to the anonymity of the test results it was not possible to see the measurable progress in the individual students, the third condition of selection was closely related to it. In order to better understand the students' progress during online education, it seemed essential that the respondents have such progress. In other words, such students were selected to be the respondents of the interview who had had the opportunity to improve in their ability to form and use the passive voice in the course of the two lessons. In both of the classes, there were students whose level was higher than average and who seemed to understand the passive voice and to be able to use it before the grammar was explained. These students tended to be very active in the lessons, however, the opportunity for their improvement was much smaller than with the others, and their responses to the interview would therefore be less relevant.

2.3.3 Transcript of interviews

As stated in the previous chapters, the interviews were both conducted in Czech. The transcripts provided are therefore a translation as translated by the interviewer. The transcriptions in Czech can be found in the appendix of this thesis.

Interview 1

Question: I will start by asking which format of education suited you better, distance or in-class education?

Answer: In-class, I think.

Question: Could you elaborate on why? What are the most significant advantages or disadvantages of distance education?

Answer: Personal contact is very important for me, both with the teacher and also my friends, also for example when we practise conversation in English it's not ideal to do it online in my opinion, as there's never enough time to cover everything.

Question: Did you also find it more difficult to focus during the online classes?

Answer: A little bit, after all when we are at school, the teacher is looking at me and I feel I need to pay attention all the time, while when we have an online class there's a strong tendency to do something else.

Question: Do you think that online lessons have been beneficial for you? Would they maybe be more beneficial if they took place in a classroom?

Answer: It's definitely better to have online classes than nothing, for example in English you at least need to hear the language and so on, so I think it has been beneficial, but I think it would definitely be better for me if I could attend them at school.

Question: Let's focus now specifically on classes of English and primarily those, which were taught by me within my teaching practice. First of all, do you think that lessons of English, or foreign languages in general, are suitable for online education? Why yes or why not?

Answer: I don't find it ideal, in English classes it's important to speak somewhat continuously to the teacher or your classmates during some conversation practice and during online education, it is usually only one person who has the chance to speak, we have to take turns and that is just not ideal in my opinion.

Question: During the two lessons within my teaching practice we covered the grammar of the passive voice in English, and we practised it. How would you evaluate your knowledge of this grammar item before the two lessons?

Answer: We had covered this grammar last year, but honestly, I did not remember it much and I also could not use it properly, so the test at the beginning was quite hard for me. But I think that after the two lessons the grammar had been explained quite well and we practised it a lot too.

Question: That was exactly my next question, do you think that your knowledge of the grammar item was on a better level after the two classes, that the classes helped?

Answer: I think it was evident that we had practised the grammar, on the other hand, I think that I would need a little bit more time, I think more than in in-class lessons, it seems I don't need to dedicate as much time to something in those.

Question: Do you feel that both you and your whole class have made some progress during the two lessons?

Answer: I think so, it reminded me what we had previously covered and in fact, the second test was much easier for me, I navigated better and generally, I improved.

Question: One last question which you have also already partially answered, do you think that your improvement and, if you can evaluate, the improvement of the whole class would be better, if the two lessons had an in-class format?

Answer: I would say so, I think we manage to cover more in an in-class lesson and we also have more time to practise. It's also easier to communicate with our classmates or ask someone if there is something we don't understand, help each other with homework and so on.

Interview 2

Question: I will start by asking which format of education suited you better, distance or in-class education?

Answer: Definitely in-class.

Question: Could you elaborate on why? What are the most significant advantages or disadvantages of distance education?

Answer: I focus better on in-class education, I don't let my eyes wander, at the same time I have a fixed time when I come to school and when I leave, I meet my classmates, I can ask the teacher directly and it's easier to maintain eye contact

Question: Did you also find it more difficult to focus during the online classes?

Answer: Yes, because I am at home during distance education and there are many distractions there.

Question: Do you think that online lessons have been beneficial for you?

Answer: Yes, but I would still prefer an in-class education.

Would the lessons maybe be more beneficial if they took place in a classroom?

Answer: Yes.

Question: First of all, do you think that lessons of English, or foreign languages in general, are suitable for online education? Why yes or why not?

Answer: I don't think they are beneficial, as the internet connection can be weak, the image or voice can freeze, and I can't react as fast as in a classroom.

Question: Do you think language classes are specific in some way?

Answer: Definitely, as there is a focus on correct pronunciation in language classes and I think that you cannot hear sounds as well during a video call.

Question: During the two lessons within my teaching practice we covered the grammar of the passive voice in English, and we practised it. How would you evaluate your knowledge of this grammar item before the two lessons?

Answer: To be honest, I had no idea what it was about, and I would evaluate my knowledge as bad. I guessed the answers in the first test, I tried to base them on Czech, but other than that I had no idea.

Question: Do you think that your knowledge of the grammar item was on a better level after the two classes, that the classes helped?

Answer: I guess I understood it better, but before the lessons, I had no knowledge of that whatsoever, so it definitely improved. The two lessons were not enough, I started understanding some things only in the later practice, but I definitely think that I had better results in the second test.

Question: Do you feel that both you and your whole class have made some progress during the two lessons?

Answer: As I said, it was an improvement from zero to at least something, so yes.

Question: Do you think that your improvement and, if you can evaluate, the improvement of the whole class would be better, if the two lessons had an in-class format?

Answer: In my opinion definitely yes, I feel that we don't manage to do as much in online classes and it's more difficult to understand without even seeing the teacher who explains it, it's also very difficult to stare into the computer for seven hours straight, it's not as hard in the classroom.

2.3.4 Results of interviews

As mentioned in the previous chapters, certain assumptions were made prior to conducting the interviews. To summarize, it was assumed that from the students' responses it would be obvious that the students preferred the classical face-to-face style of education to the online education. The students were expected to respond that it was more difficult for them to concentrate during the online lessons. It was however assumed that despite the assumed preference of classical education the students would be able to perceive certain progress in their knowledge and abilities, both in general and specifically in the two particular lessons focusing on the passive voice in English. Despite that, it was presumed that the students would feel that attending the identical lessons not in the virtual environment but in a physical classroom would be more beneficial for them.

It seems necessary to put an emphasis on the fact that these assumptions were not based on any previous research or any measurable data. All of the assumptions are based solely on the previous experience of the interviewer with online classes, on the overall atmosphere in the lessons and informal conversations with the teacher of the two classes and the students themselves.

The assumptions were mostly fulfilled by both of the students, as there was a strong preference for an in-class education to the distance one. Each of the respondents provided valid reasons for that preference. Both of the respondents also stated that it is more difficult for them to concentrate during online classes than during in-class ones due to the fact that they face more distractions when studying from home.

Despite the fact that the students preferred the in-class education and even thought that their progress in knowledge would be more significant if the lessons in question took place in a physical classroom, both of them also admitted that they did in fact see an improvement after the two lessons in question and both mentioned, that the post-test felt easier for them. However, the students also mentioned that although they understood the introduced grammar item better, two lessons were not enough for them to feel comfortable using it and that it was not until further lessons that they began to understand some of its aspects.

Conclusion

This diploma thesis aimed to describe the tools and methods of distance education and to analyse its effectiveness in English lessons specifically focused on the grammar of the passive voice. Small-scale research was conducted over the course of two lessons in two classes of an upper-secondary school. The results of the research were based on an analysis and comparison of two tests which were completed by two groups of students before and after attending two English lessons focused on explanation and practice of the passive voice, on an evaluation of the test results by the classes' original English teacher, and interviews conducted with two of the students.

The test results proved that there was a significant improvement in the students' ability to understand and use the passive voice and that it was not only their knowledge but also their subjective perception of their knowledge which improved, and the students felt more comfortable using the passive voice after participating in the two lessons. The overall improvement in the post-test was 15,65 % and the students' perception of their understanding and the ability increased by 15 %. The research was proven to be reliable as both of the study groups show a similar tendency in their progress and the research is therefore independent of time or group of students. According to the classes' original teacher, the overall improvement of the students in both groups was average in the context of the two specific classes.

The interviews with two of the students also proved that the students themselves felt progress in their understanding of the passive voice in English and confirmed that they considered the two lessons in question to be effective. Nevertheless, the students also showed a strong preference for an in-person type of education over online classes and both of them estimated that had the two lessons taken place in a physical classroom, their progress would be more significant. Such an evaluation is, however, only a subjective opinion of the students and would require more research to be proven.

In conclusion, the research proved that the distance form of education can bear certain effectivity and that the students participating in online classes have shown progress in the practised subject matter. A comparison of these results to identical research during in-

class lessons would show whether the effectivity of distance education is on a similar level as the effectivity of in-person education.

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Appendix

Transcript of Interview 1

Otázka: Začneme tím, že se vás zeptám, která forma výuky vám vyhovovala více, distanční, nebo prezenční?

Odpověď: Asi prezenční bych řekla.

Otázka: Mohla byste rozvést proč? Jaké jsou podle vás největší výhody nebo nedostatky distanční výuky?

Odpověď: Pro mě je hodně důležitý osobní kontakt, i s profesorem a zároveň třeba s kamarády a podobně, když například v angličtině máme dělat nějaké konverzace, tak pro mě dělat to online není úplně ideální, navíc není nikdy dost času, abychom to vše zvládli probrat.

Otázka: Přišlo vám při online hodinách například náročnější udržet pozornost?

Odpověď: Trošku ano, přeci jen když jsme ve škole, tak se na mě profesor dívá a mám pocit, že pořád musím být ve střehu, zatímco když máme hodinu online tak tendence dělat při ní něco jiného je hodně silná.

Otázka: Myslíte si, že pro vás byly online hodiny přínosné, nebo máte třeba pocit, že by byly přínosnější, kdyby se odehrávaly prezenčně?

Odpověď: Určitě je lepší online výuka než nic, například při angličtině člověk potřebuje ten jazyk slyšet a podobně, takže určitě online výuka přínosná byla, ale myslím si, že kdybych byla na té výuce prezenčně ve škole, tak by to určitě bylo lepší.

Otázka: Zaměříme se teď konkrétně na hodiny angličtiny, a to zejména na ty, které proběhly v rámci mé praxe. Nejdříve, přijde vám, že hodiny angličtiny nebo jazyků obecně jsou vhodné pro distanční formu výuky, případně proč ano nebo proč ne?

Odpověď: Moc ideální mi to nepřišlo, protože v té angličtině je hodně důležité, aby člověk mohl nějak kontinuálně mluvit s profesorem nebo alespoň se spolužáky v nějakých konverzacích a při té online výuce má většinou šanci mluvit jen jeden, musíme se střídat a není to pro mě ideální.

Otázka: Ve dvou hodinách mé praxe jsme se věnovali výuce a procvičování trpného rodu v angličtině, jak byste hodnotila svou znalost této gramatiky před těmito dvěma hodinami?

Odpověď: My už jsme tuto gramatiku probírali minulý rok, ale upřímně jsem si toho moc nepamatovala a ani jsem to neuměla moc použít, takže ten test na začátku byl pro mě dost těžký, ale přijde mi, že po těch dvou hodinách mi byla dobře vysvětlená ta gramatika a docela dobře jsme si to procvičili.

Otázka: To byla přesně moje další otázka, jestli máte pocit, že po těch dvou hodinách byla vaše znalost této gramatiky podle vás na lepší úrovni, jestli ty dvě hodiny pomohly.

Odpověď: Ano, řekla bych, že bylo znát, že jsme si to procvičili, ale zároveň bych se tomu potřebovala věnovat víc času, asi víc než při prezenčních hodinách, to mi přijde, že to potřebuji zopakovat méněkrát.

Otázka: Máte pocit, že jste se za ty dvě hodiny stejně zlepšila a že celkově ve vaší třídě byl nějaký progres?

Odpověď: To asi ano, hodně jsem si připomněla, co jsme probrali za ten minulý rok, a vlastě i ten druhý test pro mě byl mnohem jednodušší než ten první, lépe jsem se orientovala a bylo to prostě lepší.

Otázka: Ještě poslední otázka, kterou jste už také částečně zodpověděla, myslíte si, že by to vaše zlepšení a pokud můžete zhodnotit, tak i zlepšení celé třídy bylo větší, kdyby se stejné hodiny odehrály prezenčně ve třídě?

Odpověď: Řekla bych, že ano, přijde mi, že když jsme v prezenční výuce v hodině, tak se toho stihne probrat víc a víc si to také procvičíme, a je jednodušší se domluvit se spolužáky nebo třeba se zeptat, když něčemu nerozumím, třeba i probrat tu látku po výuce se spolužáky, poradit si s úkoly a podobně.

Transcript of Interview 2

Otázka: Nejdříve se zeptám, která forma výuky Vám vyhovuje více, distanční nebo prezenční?

Odpověď: Rozhodně prezenční

Otázka: Mohla byste trochu rozvést proč, jaké jsou podle Vás nevýhody a výhody distanční výuky?

Odpověď: Při prezenční výuce se lépe soustředím, tolik neuhýbám očima jinam, zároveň mám přesně daný čas, kdy přijdu do školy, kdy odejdu, vidím se se spolužáky a můžu se učitele rovnou zeptat a můžu navázat oční kontakt lépe než při online výuce.

Otázka: Přijde Vám při online hodinách náročnější udržet pozornost?

Odpověď: Ano, protože výuku mám doma a mám tam mnoho impulzů které mě rozptylují.

Otázka: Myslíte si, že pro Vás byly online hodiny přínosné?

Odpověď: Ano, ale stejně bych spíše uvítala prezenční výuku.

Otázka: Máte tedy pocit, že by stejné hodiny byly přínosnější, kdyby se odehrávaly ve třídě?

Odpověď: Ano.

Otázka: Zaměříme se teď konkrétně na hodiny angličtiny, a to zejména na ty, které proběhly v rámci mé praxe. Nejdříve, přijde vám, že hodiny angličtiny nebo jazyků obecně jsou vhodné pro distanční formu výuky, případně proč ano nebo proč ne?

Odpověď: Nejsou výhodné, protože může často vypadávat internetové připojení, seká se obraz a zvuk a nemohu tak rychle reagovat jako při prezenční výuce.

Otázka: A myslíte si, že je něco jinak konkrétně při hodinách jazyků?

Odpověď: Určitě ano, protože v hodinách jazyků je kladen důraz na správnou výslovnost a myslím si, že při online výuce není tak dobře slyšet hlas jako při prezenční výuce.

Otázka: V hodinách se mnou jsme se věnovali konkrétně trpnému rodu v angličtině, jak byste hodnotila svou znalost této gramatiky před těmito hodinami?

Odpověď: Popravdě jsem vůbec nevěděla o co jde, hodnotila bych to celkem špatně, i ten první test jsem celý natipovala, nebo se snažila to správně odhadnout třeba podle češtiny, ale jinak jsem vůbec nevěděla.

Otázka: Přijde Vám, že po těch dvou hodinách se mnou byla ta gramatika vysvětlena a procvičena dostatečně?

Odpověď: Asi mám pocit, že jsem to chápala víc, ale předtím jsem to neuměla vůbec, takže po nich to bylo určitě lepší. Ty dvě hodiny byly málo na nějaké procvičování, některé věci mi začaly docházet až po těch dalších, ale stoprocentně si myslím, že ten druhý test dopadl lépe než ten první.

Otázka: Myslíte si, že jste se za ty dvě hodiny zlepšila, že tam byl nějaký progres i třeba v rámci třídy, jestli můžete zhodnotit?

Odpověď: Jak už jsem řekla, bylo to zlepšení z nuly alespoň na něco, takže ano.

Otázka: Myslíte si, že by to zlepšení bylo větší, kdyby se ty stejné hodiny odehrávaly ve třídě prezenčně?

Odpověď: Podle mého názoru určitě ano, mám pocit, že v online hodinách se toho tolik nestihne a je o něco horší to pochopit, když ani nevidím učitele, který nám to vysvětluje, taky je náročné třeba sedm hodin v kuse koukat do počítače, což ve třídě tak náročné není.

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