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## **ALTERNATIVES IN TRANSLATING CERTAIN GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES FROM ENGLISH INTO SERBIAN<sup>2</sup>**

This paper analyses several syntactic structures (English passive forms, non-finite clauses, clefts) in the EFL tertiary-level students' translations from English to Serbian and the various translation alternatives. The selection of this topic was determined by the author's long experience in teaching grammar and translation to the tertiary-level students of English at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. This teaching experience has initiated a particular interest in the students' linguistic performance when using certain structures that differ from the structures in their mother tongue by their form and function and register. The aforementioned structures were selected because they represent the point of contrast between the two languages since they are either used in different registers (passive), or differ in both form and function (non-finite clauses) or nonexistent in one language and used in almost all registers in the other one (clefts).

*Keywords:* contrastive analysis, passive, non-finite clauses, cleft clauses, English to Serbian translation

### Introduction

#### 1.1 The subject and goal of the research

The alternative translations studied, even those contextually unsuitable or ungrammatical, are not treated as a consistent mistake but rather as avoidance of using proper structures in the target language (TL) (when translating from English to Serbian). Alternative translations of the aforementioned structures are identified on the corpus comprised of the students' translations of the English sentences containing these structures within a text. The starting premise was that the alternative translations that are unsuitable for particular contexts or registers in Serbian, or those that are literal and even ungrammatical, are not caused by students' consistent failure to learn English properly but rather by a frequent disregard for the mother tongue (MT) norm concerning the use of passive forms, non-finite clauses, and emphasis, so these "errors" are to be understood as the consequence of the differences between the two languages – English and Serbian.

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Actually, these lapses in translation result from students' disregard for the mother tongue grammar and their tendency to reach for easier alternatives.

The paper first defines the research goals. Then it presents the theoretical framework of the research, and finally the description of the empirical research conducted and its results and discussion of the results.

The primary goal of the research was to describe three segments of the English and Serbian grammar in contrast, and their alternative translations from English to Serbian. The aim was to determine whether the Serbian tertiary-level EFL students observed the differences in use, form and function of these three structures when translating them from English to Serbian, i.e. whether they produced grammatically and semantically acceptable Serbian structures in their translations or merely transferred these structures literally, disregarding such usage subtleties. Therefore, two hypotheses were postulated:

Hypothesis 1: Serbian tertiary-level EFL students are inclined to translating the structures in question literally, thus producing alternative structures in Serbian and even marginalising certain grammatically acceptable forms since they replace them with the English forms that are thus mechanically transferred into the Serbian language. However, since the respondents in the empirical research were the students of the fourth year of study, the following subhypotheses were stated:

a) The students are expected to translate English sentences containing the studied structures in such a way as to produce acceptable Serbian alternatives.

b) A negligibly small number of students are expected to translate the targeted sentences in the English text by producing incorrect and unacceptable translation.

This hypothesis is related to the fact that, due to a difference between the two language structures, English and Serbian, the students tend to use the forms that are similar to those in English when translating to Serbian, thus producing various alternative structures, some of which are even unacceptable in the mother tongue.

Hypothesis 2: Ex-cathedra tuition on forms, syntactic functions and registers of use of the observed structures (passive, non-finite clauses and cleft clauses) has a positive impact on the students' language performance.

### Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this paper is contrastive analysis based on the description of the two language systems as presented in numerous English and Serbian grammar books and relevant articles.

#### Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis (CA) is a linguistic procedure which implies a systematic comparison of two languages with the purpose of determining their similarities and differences (Đorđević, 1987:9), the linguistic method that determines the aspects of two languages which are different and those which are similar (Filipović, 1975:13), or the linguistic subdiscipline that compares two or more languages or language subsystems with the purpose of determining their differences and similarities (Fisiak, 1981:1). Also, error analysis (EA) was applied – contrastive method which analyses students' errors and the

reasons why they make them (Đorđević, 1987: 3). Therefore, error analysis is related to both pedagogical and psycholinguistic aspects of FL learning. The results obtained by the application of contrastive analysis having theoretical and practical implications means that these two disciplines of contrastive linguistics are complementary (Janković, 2017, unpublished doctoral thesis).

The concept of the interlanguage (IL), significant for error analysis, was first used by Selinker in his paper "Interlanguage" published in *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* in 1972. He discusses that EFL students create their own variety of the English language that has its own particular characteristics and rules. This system is created during a certain stage of EFL learning. Therefore, EFL students use the language that is neither the foreign language they learn nor the mother tongue (already acquired) but the "third language" which has its own grammar, syntax, lexis. The earliest concepts related to interlanguage are found in Corder (1967). According to this author, the knowledge of foreign language learners is a unique whole which integrates the new knowledge with the already existing knowledge of the mother tongue and organizes it in a novel manner. Applying the *trial-and-error* system or checking their own hypotheses about the foreign language they learn, FL learners gradually create a language system that most resembles the one used by the native speakers of the language they learn. Various authors define interlanguage using different terms - *idiosyncratic dialect* (Corder, 1971; Ellis, 2015: 118; Brown, 1994: 203–204; Freeman & Long, 1991: 60–61), which is merely a *transitional competence* that reflects the dynamics of the foreign language knowledge evolvment; *approximative system* (Nemser, 1971), which is only one of numerous phases of foreign language learning during which FL students endeavour to achieve the native speakers' competence and performance.

Basically, interlanguage is an adaptation technique applied by FL students, containing several learning strategies, such as simplification, reduction, generalization, transfer, avoidance, substitution and restructuring of particular segments of the foreign language they learn (Selinker, 1972) that are adopted by FL students during their complex and multilayered process of mastering that foreign language and achieving the native speakers' competence (the skill frequently expected from the tertiary-level EFL students). These interconnected stages of FL learning are combined into what Corder (1967) terms *built-in syllabus*, i.e. *interlanguage continuum*.

Selinker emphasizes five cognitive processes that FL students employ: language transfer, learning transfer, foreign language learning strategies, communication strategies and generalization of the foreign language linguistic material. These processes facilitate the acquisition of the foreign language system. The interlanguage thus created is:

- Flexible – the rules that FL students create are not fixed but rather prone to change (Ellis, 1985: 50);
- Dynamic – FL students constantly examine and re-examine the already acquired habits and methods of language learning (primarily of their mother tongue) in order to adapt them to new suppositions that they themselves create related to the language system of the foreign language they learn;

- Systematic – since the interlanguage has its own rules, FL students base their foreign language production on their personal and already established system in the same manner in which the native speakers base their own production of that language (which is their mother tongue) on their already acquired knowledge of that same language.

Since the 1970s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interlanguage has been understood as a certain kind of mental process that helps FL students to reorganize their own version of the foreign language system they learn, thus attempting to understand its characteristics. The interlanguage theory has shifted its focus from the teacher to the student. Namely, since it is the student that is an active participant in FL learning, it means that the reasons for creating an interlanguage are to be found in the mental processes that assist FL students in transferring their learned material into knowledge and in realizing their cognitive systems through their language production and performance.

Contrastive analysis discusses that the majority of mistakes made by FL learners are caused by the negative interference of the learners' mother tongue, which means that FL learners unavoidably create some kind of interlanguage that is different from the foreign language they learn. Endeavouring to achieve the native speakers' competence, FL learners are faced with various stages, the periods of either learning or non-learning of the FL. Selinker defines them as *learning strategies* applied by FL students - *over-generalization, avoidance or dodging strategy, simplification, and overuse* (Selinker, 1972). Also, Selinker introduces the term *fossilization*, defined as a permanent cognitive and behavioural state:

fossilisable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL native language tend to keep in their IL interlanguage relative to a particular TL target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL. Fossilisable structures tend to remain as potential performance, reemerging in the productive performance of an IL even when seemingly eradicated (Selinker, 1972: 215).

The fossilization resulting from the MT influence on the FL performance is *language transfer* or *interference* (Selinker, 1972). Interference is defined as the use of the linguistic elements of the MT in the FL production and it may occur at all levels: phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis and semantics (Richards, 1971). The interference errors occur in those segments in which the MT and the FL differ so significantly that FL students try to transfer the grammatical and stylistic elements of their MT to the FL production (Wang, 2008; Hayim, 2002).

A thorough examination of the systemic differences between the MT and the FL contributes to developing pedagogical methods that help FL students to make fewer errors in their FL performance and production. Namely, FL students constantly transfer structural and semantic elements of their MT and their own culture to the FL structure and culture, which means that the negative transfer or interference is more likely to occur in those segments in which the two languages differ the most (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

## Avoidance strategy

The MT influence on the FL learning and the issue of the language transfer crucially affecting the IL have been approached differently by linguists (Selinker, Gass, 2008: 136). Some linguists propose that the MT influence is rather mechanical and thus not deemed relevant in the FL learning, especially regarding learners' selection of the FL structures that they use. Here are some of the opinions:

"... language background did not have a significant effect on the way ESL learners order English morphemes" (Larsen–Feeman, 1978: 372).

"Interference, or native to target language transfer, plays such a small role in language learning performance" (Whitman and Jackson, 1972: 40).

"Direct interference from the mother tongue is not a useful assumption" (George, 1972: 45).

However, some more recent studies of the MT relevance and the FL acquisition do not accept these attitudes in full. Namely, EFL students, particularly tertiary-level students of English, themselves determine and select which segments of their MT are more likely to transfer to the FL or which segments of their MT to accept. The linguistic research of the language transfer has taken a rather different course since the 1970s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by advocating the idea that it is not only a behavioural but also a creative process.

Various studies in the field prove this idea. Schachter (1974) emphasizes that the respondents avoided certain structures of the English language particularly because of the influence of their MT. This author points out that FL students are in constant contact with the FL they learn and are thus able to develop new hypotheses considering its linguistic structure and to modify or even reject those they have already learned (Schachter, 1974: 442).

The MT largely determines which FL structures learners select to produce and which ones they avoid. For instance, Selinker (2008: 138) mentions the research conducted by Kleinmann (1977). This study analyzes and compares the use of the English passives, present progressive, infinitive complements, and direct object pronouns by two groups of students – the students whose MT was Arabic, and those whose MT was Spanish. All the respondents were proficient level EFL students, which means that they had an advanced knowledge of the English structures whose use was examined. Therefore, the difference in the obtained results could not be ascribed to a lack of the necessary knowledge but to the respondents' own choice to use particular structures in order to express their thoughts or actions. Kleinmann states that their choice was influenced by their mother tongues.

Although the reasons for avoiding certain FL structures might be multiple, the most obvious reason is a great difference between the MT and FL structure, resulting in the avoidance of those forms which are either non-existent or completely different in the MT.

Occasionally, FL students tend to avoid the FL structures that they find too complex to be acquired and used. For instance, the Jewish EFL learners (Dagut and Laufer, 1985) have difficulty learning the English phrasal verbs, most likely because they are lacking in their MT. In the research conducted, they avoided the use of the phrasal verbs and preferred the “proper” verbs instead (*enter* in place of *come in* or *remove* instead of *take away*). Moreover, when required, they would rather use the phrasal verbs whose meaning is more obvious, literal phrasal verbs (*go out*, *get in*) than the phrasal verbs whose meaning is difficult to detect, idiomatic phrasal verbs (*mix up*, *face up to*). Dagut and Laufer conclude that the avoidance of these English forms was influenced more by the complexity of this segment of the English language structure than by the differences between the MT and the FL. Yet, it is possible to add that the avoidance is essentially based on the MT interference, the Jewish language, due to the lack of this form in that language.

The research conducted by Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) studied the use of the English phrasal verbs by the Dutch students of English (Dutch has phrasal verbs, just like English). The obtained results showed that the Dutch EFL students avoided the use of the English phrasal verbs which were very similar to their Dutch counterparts. The researchers explain this result by the students’ disbelief that a foreign language could have the linguistic structure similar to that of their own mother tongue.

Laufer and Eliasson (1993) studied the frequency of use of the English phrasal verbs and their avoidance by the Swedish EFL proficient-level students (Swedish has phrasal verbs, just like English). The students were assigned two tests: a multiple-choice test, and a text in Swedish to translate into English. The goal of the research was to determine how frequently the Swedish EFL students used the English phrasal verbs or avoided them when doing the multiple-choice test or translating from Swedish to English. Both literal and idiomatic phrasal verbs were included in the tests. The comparison of the obtained results with the results obtained in the aforementioned research with the Jewish EFL students showed that the avoidance in EFL learning was mainly based on the differences between the MT and the EFL. Notwithstanding the fact that a similarity between the MT and the EFL (the Dutch study) as well as the complexity of the English forms examined might cause avoidance, it is evident that the differences between the MT and the FL are of vital importance.

The study of the type of errors that EFL students make encounters certain contradiction – whether they are the negative transfer consequences (the mother tongue interference) or whether they are merely transitory by nature, common in certain stages of EFL learning and thus universal since they are made even by the native speakers of the FL when they acquire it as their MT. Certain authors think that even those errors that are evident examples of the MT grammar interference are made because EFL students check the EFL grammar rules and their own hypotheses about this foreign language (Corder 1967). This approach corresponds to the theoretical postulates by Chomsky (1965: 30) that even the MT acquisition includes some kind of checking and testing of the hypotheses related to the nature of the language being acquired. Therefore, during the fifties and sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when error analysis focused mainly on its pedagogical implication, there occurred a shift in the course of interest, owing much to Corder’s paper (1967, “The Significance of Learners’ Errors”). Corder states that FL students’ errors are to be

understood and conceptualized differently in that they are not to be inevitably corrected since they reflect only one stage that FL students have reached in their FL learning. FL students' errors should not be perceived as resulting from insufficient or incorrect learning of a foreign language or as a reflection of an incorrect imitation of the native speakers' linguistic habits but rather as a reflection of FL students' attempts to understand the structures and functions of the foreign language they learn and consequently discern the rules and norms governing its use. Thus understood, FL students' errors prove that FL learning is dominated by a certain system based on FL students' individual rules.

Corder makes a distinction between "performance slips" or mistakes and errors. Mistakes are mainly made once or twice by someone who does not lack the knowledge of that language but lacks concern or attention, they are unsystematic and thus irrelevant for FL learning. Errors are systematic and made unconsciously by FL learners when using the foreign language they learn – they incorporate an incorrect form of the FL into their own system or IL, created during FL learning. They are errors only from the teachers' perspective, not from the FL students' one since they themselves create their IL and do not consider anything incorporated in it as wrong or incorrect.

Error analysis examines FL learners' errors and compares correct forms of the target language (TL) with the forms that FL learners create in their IL. Contrastive analysis compares two or more languages with the purpose of discovering their differences and similarities. This paper applies the contrastive method to compare and contrast two languages, the Serbian language (the respondents' mother tongue) and the English language (the foreign language they study), i.e. to compare and contrast the types of errors the Serbian tertiary-level students of English make when using certain English language forms and to show that they are the result of the negative transfer or interference of the MT. The paper aims to contribute to both the field of linguistics concerned with contrastive analysis and the improvement of EFL teaching at the tertiary level of study.

Contrastive linguistics states that the mother tongue does influence the process of foreign language learning, which is defined as the mother tongue interference that can be either a positive or negative transfer. The mother tongue unavoidably shapes the manner in which its native speakers think, therefore it shapes the manner in which they learn and use a foreign language. However, this paper discusses a totally inverted process observed through the empirical research conducted: the negative transfer flow from the foreign (English) language into the mother tongue (Serbian). One of the main reasons is a general marginalisation of the importance of linguistics in our surrounding, resulting from a disregard for the Serbian language norm.

Finally, the theoretical framework was based on the grammar books and syntax reference books of both English and Serbian. Therefore, the observed structures are first described and exemplified in both languages. This description of their forms, functions and registers of use is presented as a contrastive analysis of the studied structures that further clarifies and emphasises their differences and consequently the necessity to be translated properly, regarding the aforementioned.

English and Serbian sources

The theoretical analysis of the similarities and differences in the form and use of the English and Serbian forms examined is based on their description in reference gram-

mar books of both languages, as well as in relevant articles and studies.

Considering the form and function of the English forms studied (passive, nonfinite clauses, clefts) the following sources are referred to: *Essentials of English Grammar* by Jespersen (1933), *Communicate What You Mean* by Pollock (1982), *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk et al. (1985), *Understanding and Using English Grammar* by Azar (1989), *The Oxford English Grammar* by Greenbaum (1996), *Gramatika engleskog jezika* by Đorđević (1996), *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* by Biber et al. (1999), *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* by Huddleston & Pullum (2002), *Syntax for EFL Students* by Mišić Ilić (2008), unpublished doctoral dissertation *Analiza grešaka pri upotrebi nefinitnih klauza kod studenata Anglistike* by Janković (2016). Also, the theoretical framework included certain reference materials related to translation studies and teaching translation: *The Anatomy of Translation Problems* by Dr Ping-Yen Lai (2013), *Literary Translation, Reception and Transfer* edited by Norbert Bachleitner (2020), *Teaching Translation vs Training Translators, Proceedings* (2022).

As regards the form and function of the Serbian forms studied (*pasiv, nefinitne klauze and emfaza*), the following sources are considered: *Savremeni srpskohrvatski jezik (gramatički sistemi i književnojezička norma)* by Stevanović (1979), *Savremeni srpskohrvatski jezik (gramatički sistemi i književnojezička norma), II Sintaksa* by Stevanović (1991), *Gramatika srpskog jezika* by Stanojčić and Popović (1992), *Sintaksa savremenoga srpskog jezika: Prosta rečenica* by Piper et al. (2005), *Gramatika srpskog jezika za strance* by Mrazović (2009), *Gramatika srpskog književnog jezika* by Stanojčić (2010), *Normativna gramatika srpskog jezika* by Piper and Klajn (2013).

The ensuing chapters describe the English and Serbian forms studied with reference to the theoretical framework.

## English and Serbian passives, nonfinite clauses, cleft clauses/emphasis

### English passive forms

“Voice is a grammatical category which makes it possible to view the action of a sentence in either of two ways, without change of the facts reported“ (Quirk et al., 1985: 159)

- (1) *The government **adopted** the law.* (active)
- (2) *The law **was adopted** by the government.* (passive)

The active-passive relation includes two grammatical levels – the verb phrase and the clause. At the level of the verb phrase, the difference between the two voice categories is detected in that the passive constructions are formed with the auxiliary *be* followed by an *-ed* participle of the main verb. Passive constructions are possible with most transitive verbs. At the clause level, changing from active to passive presupposes the rearrangement of two clause element and one addition (Ibid, 159). The noun phrase which has the role of the subject in a passive construction corresponds to the noun phrase which is the direct object in the corresponding active construction. The subject in the active sentence could be included in a *by*-phrase in the corresponding passive construction. “The noun phrase in the



*by*-phrase is commonly referred to as the **agent**, although it could also serve other semantic roles. The passive construction with a *by*-phrase is called the **long passive**. In contrast, the **short passive** (or **agentless passive**) does not have a *by*-phrase“ (Biber et al., 1999: 475). A number of factors influence the use of the passive. The study of the general distribution of active and passive verb phrases proves that passives are most common in academic prose, news and in the registers that have the fewest total number of finite verbs (Ibid, 476). Passive constructions can be frequent in academic journal articles with whole passages being written in the passive voice. “One of the major functions of the passive is that it demotes the agent of the verb (often the person doing the action of the verb), while giving topic status to the affected patient (the entity being acted on)” (Ibid, 477). In this register, the short passive is more common than the long passive since academic writing omits the mention of the particular researcher(s). This also reveals an objective detachment from what is being discussed or presented in academic writing, the style typically expected from this type of writing. On the other hand, news use the passive, especially the short passive, for other reasons: the focus of the story is “an event involving an affected person or institution, and the agent of this event may be easy to infer, uninteresting, or already mentioned. Hence, with a journalistic desire to save space and maximize what is novel, it is natural to omit these agents. For example, reference to ‘the police’ is omitted in an example like:

*Doherty was arrested in New York in June.*

In other instances the precise agent(s) may not be known, or they are not mentioned for legal reasons:

*The officer was beaten and repeatedly kicked in the head.*“ (Ibid, 477)

In conversations, being concerned with people’s actions, thoughts, and stances, the subject is not usually demoted and it is often the speaker.

Passives occur in both finite and non-finite constructions.

a) Finite constructions

- Short passive with stative verbs

Stative passives depict the state resulting from an action, not the action itself:

(3) *All the shop windows were smashed in the storm.*

- Short passive with dynamic verb

Dynamic passives depict an action, not the resulting state:

(4) *It is vital that all the danger is avoided.*

- Long passives

(5) *The students were given a lecture on politics by Prime Minister.*

“Finite constructions also include forms preceded by semi-modals and other auxiliary equivalents: *has to be done, need to be taken, used to be written, etc.*“ (Ibid, 936).

b) Non-finite constructions

- Postmodifier of noun, short passive

(6) *She received her birthday present **wrapped** in beautiful decorative paper.*

- Postmodifier of noun, long passive

(7) *The new college policy, **accepted by the University board**, stirred the otherwise tepid academic atmosphere.*

The verbs in *-ed* clauses correspond directly to the passive in finite clauses since the meaning in (6) and (7) can be paraphrased as *...her birthday present was wrapped ...* and *...the new college policy was accepted.*

- Infinitive or *-ed* complement of a verb, short passive

(8) *I am having the attic **converted** into a bedroom.*

(9) *If they allow so much rubbish **to be left** near the Pyramids, they will deteriorate.*

- Infinitive or *-ed* complement of a verb, long passive

(10) *The thieves are said **to have been caught by the police** while sitting in a bar.*

(11) *Generally speaking, the city policy has its drawbacks **caused by various inaccuracies.***

As verb complements, non-finite passive constructions may lack a subject (*no decisions **are to be taken** regarding ...*) or be preceded by an overt subject (*its drawbacks **caused by ...***).

Considering the syntactic positions and registers of passive constructions, the short dynamic *be*-passive in finite clauses is the most basic passive pattern. "The main purpose of the short dynamic passive is to leave the initiator of an action (the agent) unexpressed. This may be because the agent is unknown, redundant, or irrelevant (ie. of particularly low information value). The need to leave the agent unexpressed varies with register. Academic prose shows the most frequent use of such short dynamic passives ... Academic discourse is concerned with generalizations, rather than the specific individuals who carry out an action. If expressed, the agent would be a generic pronoun or noun phrase in such examples: *... can be restored by us/one/ researchers/laboratory workers*. Its omission also means that the verb phrase is more often in clause final position, characteristic of new information" (Biber et al., 938). News is also marked by the use of short dynamic passives. Namely, even though news is concerned with specific events rather than generalizations, the agent is omitted since it is either irrelevant or not allowed to be stated, which is the reason why short passives are common in this register.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 67) refer to passive constructions as non-canonical constructions - they differ from their more basic counterparts in the way the information content is presented. In passive constructions, "the semantic roles are aligned

with syntactic functions. The object of the active appears as subject of the passive, and the subject of the active appears as the complement of the preposition *by*; in addition, the passive contains the auxiliary verb *be*, taking a past participial complement. We refer to the *by* phrase as the internalised complement: it is an internal complement of the passive VP, whereas the element in the active to which it corresponds, namely the subject, is an external complement. The internalised complement is generally optional: clauses in which it is present we call long passives, as opposed to short passives like *I was attacked*.” (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 68).

### Serbian passive forms

According to the Serbian grammar books, the voice is a grammatical category of interpretative nature that enables two perspectives of the same situation – the perspective of the doer of the action as a grammatical subject and the perspective of the affected as a grammatical subject (the object in the active sentence) (Piper, Klajn, 2013: 184). Passive constructions include transitive verbs, the subject expresses the patient, whereas the agent, if stated, is expressed by the structure *od (strane) + genitive noun phrase*. The agent is rarely expressed (Stanojčić, Popović, 1992: 245)

(12) *Predlog je prihvaćen (od /strane/ svih članova komisije).*

These relations may be expressed in two ways:

- the construction with the passive participle + auxiliary, e.g. *Predlog je pripremljen.*
- the construction with the impersonal pronoun *se*, the reflexive forms, e.g. *Predlog se priprema.*

The latter construction includes the verbs in the imperfective aspect (*nesvršeni glagoli*). Both of these passive constructions have complex verb paradigms (in Piper, Klajn, 2012:184, 185). Regarding the registers of use, passive constructions are common in administrative style. Such constructions are frequently found in literal translations from foreign languages, especially English, which use passive in various registers, particularly in academic prose and news. Therefore, precedence is to be given to an active construction, whenever possible (Ibid, 186).

### English non-finite forms

English non-finite forms are treated as non-finite clauses in contemporary grammars of English. “This becomes particularly convincing when such constructions are viewed in context, where it is possible to ‘recover’ the missing subjects and provide the adequate semantic interpretation despite syntactic ‘emptiness’” (Mišić Ilić, 2008: 171). If examined outside the context, these grammatical structures can be termed non-finite verb phrases (*to see, to be alone*). “However, when such structures are used in a sentence, it is important to take into consideration the context, which may suggest that actually we can understand who/what the subject is” (Ibid, 134).

Non-finite verb phrases are constituent parts of non-finite clauses, which lack the tensed verb, the explicit subject or the subordinating conjunction. They are infinitival, gerund-participial and past-participial clauses (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1173). The infinitival verb forms include present infinitive (*to work*), perfect infinitive (*to have worked*), progressive infinitive (*to be working*), perfective-progressive infinitive (*to have been working*), passive present infinitive (*to be worked*) and passive perfect infinitive (*to have been worked*). Gerund-participial verb phrases are the following: present participle/gerund (*working*), perfective form (*having worked*), perfective-progressive (*having been working*), passive (*/being/ worked*), passive perfective (*having been worked*).

Non-finite verb phrases constitute subordinate non-finite clauses and are closely related to the subject of the finite clause. Regarding their syntactic functions, they are nominal, relative and adverbial clauses and perform the syntactic functions of complements and modifiers:

(13) *She wants **to stay at home tonight**.* (direct object)

(14) *My favourite pastime is **swimming every day**.* (subject complement)

(15) *Don't accept the presents **given to you by your new boss**.* (postnominal modifier)

(16) ***Interested in cooking**, she took up some cooking classes.* (sentence modifier)

#### Serbian non-finite forms

Serbian non-finite verb phrases include infinitive, active and passive participle (*radni i trpni glagolski pridev*), and present and past participle (*sadašnji i prošli glagolski prilog*). They constitute subordinate non-finite clauses and have certain syntactic functions. Infinitive occurs as predicate in the sentences with prescriptive or prospective semantics and in certain interrogative sentences (Tanasić, 2005: 470). It also functions as a complement, a subject, or is frequently replaced by a subordinate clause with a preposition *da* (construction *da* + present of the verb). According to some authors (Ivić, 1972, Piper i Klajn, 2013: 412), infinitive rarely occurs as a subject, and only when it qualifies certain action, state or event. It then combines with the auxiliary verb: *Kupovati je naporno. Nije lako **raditi** po vrućini. Čitati kriminalističke romane je vrlo zanimljivo*. Active participle (*radni glagolski pridev*) is used to form complex finite verb forms. However, a number of active participles derived from non-transitory verbs function as prenominal modifiers but only when they describe evidently altered state or characteristic: *omršavele ruke, potamnelo lice, opalo lišće, zardali nož, promukli glas*, etc. Passive participle (*trpni glagolski pridev*) forms passive constructions. Yet, derived from transitory verbs, it functions as a nominal modifier (Stanojčić i Popović, 1992: 405): *Dugo su posmatrali **požutelo** lišće **poleglo** po putu. Bežao je preko livada sa **uplakanim** detetom pored sebe. Dugo su pričali o **izmenjenim** uslovima poslovanja*. The primary syntactic function of the present participle (*glagolski prilog sadašnji*) is to show the simultaneity with the action expressed by the verb of the finite clause. The present participle, being a nonfinite verb form, is normally not declined in the Serbian language. However, the last decades have witnessed the emergence of numerous adjectives ending in *-ći*, constructed from the verb base. This trend has evolved under the influence of foreign languages, English in particular. Their

nominative singular masculine form is identical to the present participle, but these adjectives have a full declension as any other adjective in Serbian, indicating case, number and gender: *tekući, tekuća, tekuće; tekući, tekuće, tekuća*. Besides this one, very common adjectives formed in this way are *rastući, leteći, viseći, odlučujući, umirujući*, etc. These are not proper participles since they express a constant characteristic or quality of the concept modified and cannot paraphrase the finite relative clause in the same syntactic function of the postnominal modifier. Therefore, it is quite acceptable to say *neidentifikovani leteći objekat*, whereas it is ungrammatical to say *\*u letećem avionu*. In this case, the finite relative clause has to be used (Janković, 2019: 276, 277).

### English cleft clauses

“Clefting is similar to dislocation in the sense that information that could be given in a single clause is broken up, in this case into two clauses, each with its own verb. There are two major types of cleft constructions: *it*-clefts and *wh*-clefts“ (Biber et al., 1998):

(17) ***It is some answers I want.***

(18) ***What I want is some answers.***

Both cleft types are used to emphasize certain elements of a sentence. The English word order being fixed, this is a grammatical structure which is used to bring into focus the parts of sentences that have to be emphasized – subject, object or verb, thus having various syntactical functions as subordinate clauses. The ensuing part of this chapter is based on Janković, 2014: 583- 591).

*It*-clefts are used to emphasize the following parts of sentences:

(19) *It was Dickens who captured the imagination of Victorian England.* (subject)

(20) *It was because his personal life was unhappy that Dickens devoted so much time to writing.* (reason)

(21) *It was in 1836 that Dickens published Pickwick Papers.* (time)

(22) *It was in America that Dickens undertook his sensational Public Readings from his own works.* (place)

*Wh*-clefts emphasize the verb

(23) *What critics have always admired is Dickens's style. /Dickens's style is what critics have always admired.*

Another construction, *pseudo cleft*, is used to emphasize the verb phrase in an English sentence, as well: *what + subject + do+ be + infinitive with or without to*. This construction is though found in informal register or colloquial style:

(24) *He wanted to popularize his books, so what he did was (to) travel round the country.*

The word *all* meaning “the only thing done“ emphasizes the action in a similar manner by placing the focus on that action as the only one taken:

(25) *Our literature lessons were rather dull. All we did was read the books out loud round the class.*

The same construction, *all+subject+verb+be*, emphasizes the complement, as well:

(26) *I went to a bookshop to look for a first edition, but all I found was a second-hand paperback.*

This construction can express two things, which should be considered when translating from English to Serbian. It is illustrated in the following example sentences:

(27) *I don't know what's wrong with the computer. All I did was switch it on.*

(28) *He wasn't very good company at Christmas. All he did was play computer games.*

In (27), the construction *all+subject+verb+be* expresses the wish on the part of the speaker to absolve themselves from blame for something that has happened, emphasizing they have not done anything wrong. This meaning is very important when translating. The correct translation of this particular example would be:

(27a) *Ne znam šta se desilo sa kompjuterom, samo sam ga uključila.*

However, this particular construction is frequently translated incorrectly, following the English language grammatical structure and disregarding the Serbian language norm:

\* (27b) *Sve što sam uradila bilo je da sam ga uključila.*

In (28), the same construction expresses negative criticism on the part of the speaker, suggesting that the action performed has taken precedence over all other actions, which was wrong. Therefore, it should be translated in the following way to retain the original meaning of the English example:

(28a) *Nije bio baš neko društvo tokom Božića, samo se igrao na kompjuteru/sve vreme je samo igrao igrice na kompjuteru,...*

Yet, it is frequently translated without any regard for the original meaning of the English construction or the Serbian language norm:

\* (28b) *Nije bio baš neko društvo tokom Božića, sve što je radio bilo je da je igrao igrice na kompjuteru*

### Serbian forms for expressing emphasis

The Serbian language, unlike English, is characterized by a flexible word order, the norm used to emphasize particular parts of sentences. The emphasis is also accomplished with the use of particles (*rečce*, *partikule* or *čestice*). This is a heterogeneous group of words in Serbian that, among other things, serve to express various attitudes towards the action, such as confirmation, emphasis, uncertainty, doubt, opposition, etc. They are closely related to adverbs: *baš*, *upravo*, *taman* (*Baš sam tebe tražio*), *možda*, *valjda*, *ipak*, *međutim*, *doduše*, *čak*, *štaviše*, *bar*, *barem*, *zbilja*, *naime*, *uostalom*, *najzad*,.... (Klajn, 2005: 52; Stevanović, 1986: 384; Stanojčić, 2010: 194). Also, the lexeme *samo* has its constraints and can be used to express the meaning of the lexeme *jedino* and/or *isključivo* (Kovačević, 2011: 190), thus serving to emphasize the doer of the action because its use

„ukazuje na to da govornik izdvaja subjekat iz onoga što se nekom neekspliciranom množtvu predikatom pripisuje, zato što prema govornikovom saznanju izdvojeni subjekat ima naročite karakteristike koje ga odlikuju od tog mnoštva, što se sa stanovišta učesnika situacije može primiti kao iznenađenje, upozorenje, i sl.“ (S. Ristić u Kovačević, 2011: 190).

When translating *cleft* and *pseudo cleft* clauses from English to Serbian, it is essential to consider the fact that the Serbian language lacks these constructions, which means that they should not be translated literally. However, this is exactly what is observed in the translation of these constructions, even when translated by tertiary-level EFL students – the translation does not observe the meaning or it often disregards the differences between the two languages, English and Serbian, which is illustrated by the following examples with *cleft* clauses and their inaccurate or grammatically unacceptable translations into Serbian:

(29) *It was at that time that I entered the service of one of the greatest English lawyers.*

\* (29a) *Bilo je to vreme kada sam započeo da radim za jednog od najboljih engleskih advokata./ Bilo je to u to vreme kada sam ja ušao u službu jednog od najboljih engleskih advokata./ To je bilo onda kada sam počeo da radim za jednog od najboljih engleskih advokata./ To je bilo u vreme kada sam ja počeo da radim za jednog od najboljih engleskih advokata./ Bilo je to tada kada sam ja počeo da radim za jednog od najboljih engleskih advokata./ Bilo je baš u to vreme kada sam ja počeo da radim za jednog od najboljih engleskih advokata.*

This sentence should be translated applying the Serbian language norm:

(29b) *Upravo tada sam.../ Baš tada sam...*

(30) *It was to this bleak spot in the flatlands of eastern England that there came a young mathematician named Thomas Jericho.*

\* (30a) *Bilo je to u to zabačeno mesto u ravninama istočne Engleske da je došao mladi matematičar po imenu Tomas Džeriko./ Desilo se da je u to zabačeno mesto u ravninama....došao...,*

The proper translation should be:

(30b) *Mladi matematičar Tomas Džeriko je došao upravo/baš u to.. / Upravo je u to .....došao mladi...*

(31) *And it wasn't until I'd had my first Saturday night sleep-over that I realized eggs could be cooked any other way than scrambled.*

\* (31a) *I nije bilo dok nisam prvi put za vikend prespavao kod druga da sam shvatio kako jaja mogu da se spremaju i drugačije a ne samo .../ I nije bilo pre nego što sam prespavao prvi put za vikend kod druga da sam shvatio...,*

The proper translation:

(31b) *Tek sam, nakon što sam prvi put prespavao kod druga za vikend, shvatio da se jaja...*

(32) *It was indeed some time before he could perceive in what sort of den his friend had constructed his retreat.*

\* (32a) *Prošlo je neko vreme pre nego što je on mogao da vidi.../ U stvari, to je bilo pre nego što je on uspeo da vidi... / To je bilo, u stvari, malo pre nego što je on mogao da vidi*

... / *Bilo je to vreme kad on nije mogao da shvati ... / Bilo je to zaista nešto malo pre nego što je on uspeo...* / *To je zapravo bilo u periodu pre nego što je on mogao da uvidi...*

This sentence should be also translated according to the Serbian language norm to emphasize the meaning by applying the mechanism of an appropriate word order and not by literal and superficial transfer of the English construction:

(32b) *Ttrebalo mu je prilično vremena da shvati/uvidi/razazna ....*

The example sentences (29 – 32) are taken from the fourth-year students' translations of their mandatory course assignments to illustrate the assumption that the Serbian language norm is disregarded even when the students are required to complete their homework tasks when they are supposed to do a thorough research of the text at both the lexical and syntactic levels.

### Empirical research

#### Corpus and its analysis

The empirical research was the analysis of the translation of three English sentences into Serbian – the sentences in the text (Appendix). The English sentences contained the passive form, the non-finite clause and the cleft clause respectively:

- *His hands **were hidden** by large gardening gloves.*
- *Silence ensued, during which Agatha, **furtively scrutinising the tenant of the chalet**, noticed that his face and neck were clearer than those of the ordinary toilers from the village.*
- ***It was at that moment that he took the liberty of inviting her** into his chalet.*

The purpose of such an empirical research was to explore the way in which they were translated into Serbian, which Serbian structures the students would use.

The research was conducted with 78 fourth-year students at the English department, Faculty of Philosophy, Niš. The respondents' native language was Serbian and they were all 22 years of age in the time of the empirical research. Their English language proficiency level was C2 according to the CEFRL. The respondents were divided in two groups: the experimental group (39 students) – lectured about English and Serbian passive verb forms, non-finite verb forms and non-finite clauses, as well as about cleft clauses in English and their acceptable substitutes in Serbian and were then assigned the text to translate; the test group (39 students) – translated the text without any prior tuition on the studied structures.

The goal was to confirm two important ideas:

- the relevance of the results of the contrastive analysis of the two languages
- the relevance of direct tuition and lecturing.

#### Methods

The methods used were contrastive and empirical, together with description and classification. The subject matter and goal of the research determined its methods. The contrastive method was essential since the empirical study was focused on the exploration



of certain language structures in two languages. Also, translation was used as a technique to determine the Serbian translation equivalents of the English sentences containing the passive, non-finite clause and cleft clause.

The definition of contrastive analysis has two elements: description and comparison. Therefore, these structures, the Serbian passive forms, non-finite clauses and structures and phrases used to express emphasis and the English passive forms, non-finite clauses and cleft clauses, were described and classified according to their registers of use and functions, as stated in the previous chapters of the paper. Then, these two descriptions were contrasted to emphasise the similarities and differences. Finally, in the empirical part of the research, the Serbian translation equivalents of the English sentences in the text were described and classified according to the results obtained from the analysis of the sentences translated by the experimental and test group, they were contrasted with the aforementioned descriptions, and similarities and differences were stated.

The analysis of the students' translation of the English sentences

The students' translations were analysed regarding the criterion whether the sentences were translated respecting the Serbian language norm in relation to the studied structures.

The translated sentences were analysed and classified into grammatically acceptable translation alternatives, contextually unsuitable translation alternatives and ungrammatical translations. Also, the results of the empirical research were presented for each of the observed structures. Moreover, the semantic criterion was taken into consideration, not only the syntactic functions.

Results of the research

The results partly confirmed the first hypothesis and partly the second one.

Table 1. Overall results of the empirical research

GRAMMATICALLY ACCEPTABLE		CONTEXTUALLY UNSUITABLE		UNGRAMMATICAL TRANSLATIONS	
number of clauses	%	number of clauses	%	number of incorrect structures	%
153	65.63	71	30.5	10	3.87

The table shows that more than half of the respondents from both experimental and test group translated the sentences from the text using the expected structures in Serbian.

However, a detailed analysis of the results obtained shows that more students translated literally the English sentence containing the passive verb form (e.g. *Njegove ruke su bile sakrivene od strane ...; Njegove ruke su bile prekrivene od ...; Njemu su ruke*

*bile prekrivene od strane ...*). Instead of using various alternatives in Serbian, such as active, but with different subjects or the structure known as *pridevski pasiv*, containing the non-finite verb form *trpni glagolski pridev* (passive participle): *su prekrivene*, the respondents translated this sentence using the passive structure in Serbian, producing thus either incorrect or contextually unsuitable sentences in Serbian.

Table 2. Passive verb form translation results

GRAMMATICALLY ACCEPTABLE		CONTEXTUALLY UNSUITABLE		UNGRAMMATICAL TRANSLATIONS	
number of clauses	%	number of clauses	%	number of incorrect structures	%
30	38.46	38	48.71	10	12.82

A detailed analysis of the results obtained regarding the translation of the English sentence with the non-finite verb form shows that the students respected the Serbian language norm and translated it using the finite form in Serbian or, by using the alternative translation of the verb *scrutinise*, translated it into the non-finite Serbian *glagolski prilog sadašnji*, the equivalent to the English Present Participle, used in the adverbial clause expressing the simultaneous action (e.g. *Usledila je tišina tokom koje je Agata krišom pomno posmatrala vlasnika kolibe....; ... tokom koje je Agata, krišom proučavajući vlasnika kolibe, ....*). The results obtained are displayed in Table 3:

Table 3. Non-finite clause translation results

GRAMMATICALLY ACCEPTABLE		CONTEXTUALLY UNSUITABLE		UNGRAMMATICAL TRANSLATIONS	
number of clauses	%	number of clauses	%	number of incorrect structures	%
48	61.53	25	32.05	5	6.41

The students found various alternatives for the translation of the sentence with the cleft clause – they used the particles (*upravo, baš, štaviše,*), or changed the word order when translating from English to Serbian. Yet, a detailed analysis of the translations of the English cleft clause shows that more students translated this particular structure literally, producing either contextually unsuitable or ungrammatical sentences in their mother tongue (e.g. *Bilo je to baš u tom trenutku da je on bio slobodan da je pozove u svoju kolibu.; Bilo je to baš u tom momentu da je on našao slobodu da je pozove u svoju kolibu.; Bio je to upravo trenutak kada je on bio slobodan da je pozove u svoju kolibu.*).

Table 4. Cleft clause translation results

GRAMMATICALLY ACCEPTABLE		CONTEXTUALLY UNSUITABLE		UNGRAMMATICAL TRANSLATIONS	
number of clauses	%	number of clauses	%	number of incorrect structures	%
21	26.92	32	41.02	25	32.05

The number of translated sentences containing contextually unsuitable alternative translations is a little higher than 30%, which shows the disregard for the mother tongue norm even among tertiary-level EFL students. One of the subhypotheses was confirmed: since the respondents were the fourth year students, they were expected to use appropriate structures in their translation.

Table 5. The experimental and test group results

	GRAMMATICALLY ACCEPTABLE		CONTEXTUALLY UNSUITABLE		UNGRAMMATICAL TRANSLATIONS	
	number of clauses	%	number of clauses	%	Number of incorrect structures	%
E	101	86.5	11	10.19	5	3.31
T	52	44.77	59	50.81	6	4.42

The comparison of the experimental and test group results confirmed the second hypothesis: straightforward tuition and lecturing on the studied structures in both languages, English and Serbian, had a positive impact on the students' performance.

However, the results obtained from the analysis of the test group translation show one interesting, although a small deviation from the overall results (more than 50% of the students used the appropriate Serbian structures in their translation) – a greater number of translated sentences containing contextually unsuitable alternative translations. This only further proves the already mentioned assumption that Serbian EFL students disregard the Serbian language norm and are ready to use anything “at hand”, thus producing unacceptable sentences in their translation. This is evident when they have to translate the structures that are either too complicated or different from the ones in their mother tongue, Serbian. Yet, these results also confirmed the relevance of lecturing on grammar.

### Conclusion

The structures studied and discussed in this research are described and contrasted with regard to their syntactic functions, registers of use and forms, which cannot be found

in grammar books or other syntax reference textbooks. Therefore, the research produced three contrastive translation models: English-Serbian passive structure, English-Serbian non-finite clauses, and English-Serbian cleft clauses/expressing emphasis.

Analysing these models, it is observed that the greatest similarities were shown in the translation of the sentence with the adverbial non-finite clause since both English and Serbian use the same structure when expressing the simultaneous actions in the sentence (Present Participle and *glagolski prilog sadašnji*). The greatest differences were observed in the translation of the sentences with the passive form and the cleft clause. The theoretical analysis of the passive forms in English and Serbian confirms these results – whereas passive verb forms are commonly used in English, they are often avoided in Serbian, particularly in fiction and conversation. Also, Serbian lacks the particular grammatical structure, cleft clauses, which is used in English for emphasizing certain parts of sentences. Instead, the focus of attention is achieved by changing the word order or by using certain particles for emphasis. These two grammatical structures are the points of contrast between the two studied languages. The empirical research proved that even tertiary-level EFL students produced either literal or contextually unsuitable translations of the two sentences containing the structures in question. Considering the fact that the respondents' task was to translate the sentences with these structures from English (FL) into Serbian (the respondents' MT), this empirical research also proved that there is evident a negative transfer flow from the foreign (English) language into the mother tongue (Serbian). One of the main reasons is a general marginalisation of the importance of linguistics in our surrounding, resulting from a disregard for the Serbian language norm.

### Scholarly and pedagogical implications

Twofold implications emerge from this research: the task was not only to describe and examine the use of the three structures in contemporary English and Serbian (passive, non-finite clauses and cleft clauses) but also to determine the Serbian translation equivalents of the English sentences containing these structures produced by the Serbian tertiary-level EFL students. The structures were directly contrasted regarding their syntactic function, form and register of use, which can contribute to a further improvement and understanding of English and Serbian syntax. Also, the empirical results can be useful to teachers and professors of English, teaching EFL students at English departments: even tertiary-level students tend to disregard the Serbian language norm and reach for the translation alternatives that are not acceptable in Serbian. These results prove that students should practice more with the texts containing particularly passive verb forms and cleft clauses in order to be able to recognise these structures when translating from English to Serbian. Also, overt teaching on certain structures in both languages helps them better understand and recognise structural differences between the language they study, English, and their native language, Serbian. The study of the grammar and syntax sources in both languages indicates the differences in use and function of the studied structures, so this are the areas of grammar that require special attention and teaching.

This is an attempt to describe and analyse just three segments of English and Serbian grammar. As regards the nature and scope of the research, the translation of the

English sentences in the text, it is limited, i.e. it is a detailed analysis of the three types of translation alternatives, grammatically acceptable, contextually unsuitable and ungrammatical ones, of only three sentences containing the passive, non-finite clause and cleft clause. It would be interesting to examine the translation of these structures from English to Serbian on a larger corpus and consider various lexical, not only syntactic alternatives.

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*Appendix: The paragraph with the analyzed sentences*

The man examined the sky with a weather-wise air for some moments. Then he turned to Agatha, and replied humbly: "The Lord only knows, Miss. It is not for a common man like me to say."

Silence ensued, during which Agatha, furtively scrutinizing the tenant of the chalet, noticed that his face and neck were cleaner and less sunburnt than those of the ordinary toilers of Lyvern.

His hands were hidden by large gardening gloves stained with coal dust. Lyvern laborers, as a rule, had little objection to soil their hands; they never wore gloves. Still, she thought, there was no reason why an eccentric workman, insufferably talkative, and capable of an allusion to the pen of the poet, should not indulge himself with cheap gloves. But then the silk, silver mounted umbrella ... It was at that moment that he took the liberty of inviting her into his chalet. He went back for Jane, who slipped on the wet grass and fell. He had to put forth his strength as he helped her to rise. "Hope you ain't sopped up much of the rainfall, Miss," he said. "You are a fine young lady for your age. Nigh on twelve stone, I should think."

She reddened and hurried to the chalet, where Agatha was.

Adapted from Shaw, G. B. (1972). *An Unsocial Socialist*. USA: W. W. Norton & Company

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#### ALTERNATIVNI PREVOD ODREĐENIH GRAMATIČKIH STRUKTURA SA ENGLESKOG NA SRPSKI JEZIK

##### *Rezime*

Rad analizira nekoliko gramatičkih struktura (pasiv, nelične klauze i *cleft* klauze u engleskom jeziku) i prevod ovih struktura sa engleskog na srpski jezik. Analiza alternativnih prevoda je sprovedena na korpusu sastavljenom od prevoda rečenica sa navedenim strukturama koje su uradili studenti četvrte godine studija engleskog jezika.

Tema je formulisana na osnovu autorkinog dugogodišnjeg rada u nastavi na tercijranom nivou učenja engleskog jezika, posebno gramatike i prevoda. Otuda i želja da se ispita nivo performanse studenata anglistike kada koriste određene gramatičke strukture koje se razlikuju od gramatičkih struktura u njihovom maternjem jeziku po formi, funkciji i registru. Navedene gramatičke structure su izabrane za analizu jer predstavljaju primere onoga u čemu se sintaksa srpskog i engleskog jezika razlikuju jer se ili koriste u različitim registrima (u slučaju pasivnih oblika), ili se razlikuju po formi i sintaksičkoj funkciji (nelični glagolski oblici i klauze) ili ne postoje u jednom jezičkom sistemu ali su zato prisutni u drugom (*clefts*).

*Ključne reči:* kontrastivna analiza, pasiv, nefinitne klauze, rascepljene klauze, prevod sa engleskog na srpski jezik