Corpus-based Analysis of the Use of the Passive Voice by Armenian Learners

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: *corpus linguistics,* *second language acquisition,* *passive voice*	The concept that learners' first language (L1) influences their second language (L2) acquisition and production is employed in a variety of studies on English language learners. However, so far, no research has been carried out on the Armenian learners of English. The fundamental question that this paper tries to answer is whether these theories apply for Armenian learners too, considering the specific features of the Armenian language. To this end I have identified the use pattern of the passive voice by Armenian learners in contrast to native speakers, aiming at revealing the influence of the Armenian language. The research is based on the contrastive interlanguage analysis of native speakers' corpora (LOCNESS) and Armenian learners' corpora (compiled by me in accordance with ICLE guidelines). The results yielded suggest that the pattern of Armenian learners' use of the passive voice is drastically different from the native ones' and that their L1 did have an impact on their production of passive voice.

1. Introduction

An array of corpora-based research has been carried out on different grammar issues by a number of learners (Chinese, Spanish, German and many more) of the English language with the aim of understanding whether their L1 influenced the course of acquiring and producing L2 English language. The aim of such research is to identify the usage patterns of various grammar topics, the scrutiny of which can provide a solid ground to analyze the connection between learners' L1 and L2. Nonetheless, so far, no research has been undertaken on the Armenian learners' production of the passive voice in English.

The importance of this research is preconditioned by the fact that the Armenian language is unique as it belongs to a separate branch of Indo-European languages and is similar to no other language, whereas English is a Germanic branch. It was hypothesized, that this typological difference cannot but have its unique trail on the outcomes of the research. To this end, parallels between the passive voice in Armenian and in English have been drawn to highlight the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic similarities and differences. This information will lay the groundwork for further discussions of the research results, as without knowing the peculiarities

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of the passive voice of Armenian learners' L1, we cannot trace their passive voice usage characteristics in English.

Two main methods of analysis have been applied: quantitative and qualitative. First, due to the quantitative method the frequency rates of different types of passives have been distinguished in both L1 English users' corpora (LOCNESS) and L2 English user's corpora (Armenian learners' corpora compiled by me in line with ICLE guidelines). Based on the quantitative data, qualitative analysis has been conducted to determine the reasons behind Armenian learners' usage pattern of the English passive voice. The results of the research suggest that Armenian learners' L1 did have a substantial effect on the acquisition and production of the English passives.

2. Literature review

2.1. The impact of L1 on L2 production

It is believed that learners, even at advanced level, cannot reach native-like command of the language. The fact, that their native language (henceforth L1) has an influence on their target language (henceforth L2) production, has been discussed by many scholars. Schachter and Rutherford (1979) state that Chinese and Japanese advanced learners of English make many mistakes, mainly in terms of discourse structure. The same idea is observed in Coppieter's (1987) work, where it is argued that learners' mistakes were mainly functional and not formal. Carroll et al (2000) conclude that the learners mostly acquire the forms of the target language at near native level, but what refers to the function, they mostly are ignorant of the applications of those forms in the context. Granger et al (2002) express a similar idea, according to which learner writing is different from Native Speakers' writing in terms of the use of several words and structures. Stutterheim (2003) states that L2 learners can achieve very high level, nearly native-like production of L2 in terms of formal system of the language, nonetheless, what refers to the application of the forms in context in line with the principle of information structure, they usually face some problems. The same holds for Stutterheim and Lambert's (2005) work, where they state that with regard to forms, advanced learners do not have any problems and can achieve native-like command, but what refers to the use of those forms, they confront many difficulties.

The above-mentioned phenomenon is conditioned by the fact that even advanced learners usually resort to their L1 information organization principles in their L2 production. A myriad of research has been carried out by different scholars (Carrol et. al., 2000; Stutterheim, 2003; Stutterheim and Lambert, 2005; Callies, 2009), who have claimed that learners' L1 has an impact on their L2 production. This is usually explained by the typological discourse parameter, which is topic prominence and subject prominence instigated by Thomson & Li (1976).

In Subject prominent (Sp) languages the subject has an important role in the sentence, without which there cannot be a sentence, the verb determines the subject, sometimes the subject of the sentence may not have a semantic role (like in the case of dummy or empty subjects), the subject is always the argument of the verb, in many languages there should be a subject and verb agreement.

In Topic prominent (Tp) the grammatical relations of topic-comment are of utter importance: the verb does not have any connection with the topic, the topic is the member of the sentence which highlights the 'center of attention' (Thompson and Li, 1976, p. 464), there is no verb topic agreement (the topic is always independent of the verb), topic is always in sentence-initial

position. Thus, to briefly sum up their descriptions, it can be stated that the topic is a discourse notion, whereas the subject is a sentence-internal notion (Thompson and Li, 1976, p. 466). English is a vivid example of Sp, while Chinese is a Tp language.

There is an array of examples of transition from Tp languages to Sp languages. Schachter and Rutherford (1979) conducted a comparative analysis of Japanese and Chinese students' L2 production, as a result of which it turned out that they produced a high number of it-extraposition and there-sentences in L2 English. This is hypothesized by the fact that their topic prominent language had an impact on their L2 production, that is, they transferred the topic-comment information structure principle to their L2.

The same tendency was observed in Rutherford's (1983) work. Mandarin, Korean and Japanese learners of English also transferred topic prominent features of their L1 into L2 English. What is interesting is that with mastering the second language, those students were prone to produce more native-like sentences. Which means that with advancing the level of L2, they tend to drop their L1 features.

Likewise, in the work of Green et al. (2000), Chinese learners of English were more inclined to use connectors under consideration in the initial position of the sentence, that is in topic position, than the native speakers. This comes to prove that because their L1 is a topic prominent language they tend to transfer this feature to their L2 (English) production, thus overusing it, even in those cases where unnecessary.

A similar study was conducted by Callies (2009) on information highlighting devices used by learners of English. The results were rather similar to the previously mentioned ones, learners tended to overuse those information highlighting structures which were common in their L2 but sounded rather unnatural in L2.

Thus, as it can be clearly observed, learners' L1 topic prominent language was reflected in their L2 production in terms of information organization. There is another study conducted by Jung (2004), who was the first to initiate research on the transition from Sp language to Tp language. His choice of transition is justified by the fact that there has been much research on the transition from Tp language to Sp language, which showed that Tp1 had an impact on the 2nd Sp language. To prove the hypotheses put forward by many researchers (Green, 1996; Heubner, 1983; Jin, 1994; Sasaki, 1990; Schacter &Rutherford, 1979; Xiao, 2002) that the learners' L1 has an impact on their L2 acquisition, he conducted a study on English learners of Korean (as previously a similar study was carried out on English learners of Chinese by Jin, 1994).

Three level of learners were distinguished, Level 1 to Level 3 (with increasing order). As a result, L1 learners tended to transfer their Sp L1 characteristics to their L2 production (preserving the subject in the produced language, where it was necessary, as Korean is a topic prominent language), Level 2 students were prone to drop subjects more often than Level 1 students and Level 2 students could produce more native-like language. Summarizing the results, he concludes that with the rise of the level the students were inclined to attain the L2 specific features irrespective of their Sp L1.

It is important to note that there is no research on the Armenian learners. Thus, our work is aimed at determining the patterns that the Armenian learners demonstrate in their L2 English production.

3. Passive voice in English and in Armenian

Before delving into the patterns of passive voice use by the Native learners and the Armenian learners, it is important to understand the specifics of the Armenian passive, which will lay

ground for conducting the comparative analysis of the use of Passive voice by the Armenian learners and Native speakers. The comparison will illustrate the differences and similarities in both languages, in the light of which we can examine the learners' usage patterns of the passive voice.

As has been emphasized previously, the Armenian language is a separate branch of Indo-European language, which makes it thoroughly different from English, which belongs to the Germanic branch of Indo-European languages. English is an analytic language, where the main means of conveying the meaning is the word order, whereas Armenian is an inflective language. Thus, it can be hypothesized that typologically these two languages are rather different from each other.

Comparing the passive voices in the English and Armenian languages, it is important to state that in English the passive voice is a syntactic phenomenon, whereas in Armenian it is morphological. It is known that English follows the SVO pattern of word order, and the logical subject mostly is the grammatical subject. In contrast, in Armenian the word order is comparatively flexible and the grammatical properties of sentence members are determined by their morphology and not the position they have in the sentence. To illustrate the point, the following example can be considered (adapted from A. Papoyan, Kh. Badikyan, 2003).

(1)	*Քամուց*	*կոտրվեց*	*ծառը:*
	Wind (Abl)	was broken	tree (Nom).

"The tree was broken by the wind."

In the example above the word *քամուց (because of the wind)* is in the subject position in the passive sentence, however, it is not the grammatical subject of the sentence, as it does not have any properties of the subject, i.e., it does not bear the action. Moreover, the grammatical subject of the sentence is in the final position, which makes it thoroughly different from the English SVO word order. Thus, it can be concluded that in Armenian passive the logical subject may not coincide with the grammatical one.

In terms of the formation of the passive voice, in English it is formed with the help of the verb *be* and *past participle.* Though, it should be stated that instead of the copular verb *be* there can also be other copular verbs, such as *get, become, feel, look, remain* and *seem.* This is conditioned by the fact that the main 'bearer' of the passiveness is the past participle.

In Armenian the passive voice is formed with the addition of the affix -վ- (v) (examples from Jahukyan, 1974).

(2)	Active voice:	*Գրիգորը*	*սպանեց*	*Հակոբին:*
		Grigor (Nom)	killed	Hakob (Acc).

"Grigor killed Hakob".

	Passive voice:	*Հակոբը*	*սպանվեց*	*Գրիգորի կողմից:*
		Hakob (Nom)	killed (was)	Grigor (Gen) by.

"Hakob was killed by Grigor".

As can be seen from the example, just by the addition of the affix -վ- to the verb (in bold), and by moving the object of the active voice to the subject position in the passive voice, we have the transition from the active voice to the passive one.

In this perspective, the English and Armenian passives are significantly different, as in English the passive voice is always easily recognizable, whereas it is not always the case in Armenian. Very often the verb can have the affix -վ- but it may convey meanings other than passive (examples from Asatryan, 2004).

(3)   *Պատրաստվում է*   *դատարան*   *դիմել:*

       Getting prepared   court   turn to.

       "He/she is getting prepared to file a lawsuit".

(4)   *Գրիգորը*   *և*   *Հակոբը*   *համբուրվեցին:*

       Grigor (Nom)   and   Hakob (Nom)   kissed.

       "Grigor and Hakob kissed each other".

(5)   *Մեքենան*   *շարժվեց*   *տեղից:*

       Car (Nom)   moved   place (Abl).

       "The car moved from its place".

To distinguish whether the verb with the affix -վ- shows passive voice or denotes a reflexive or reciprocal action, or whether it is a neutral verb, it is important to look at the 'movement' of the verb. If the grammatical subject is the bearer of the action, then the verb is in the passive voice, in other cases, if the agent is the bearer of the action (example 3), then it is a reflexive action, if the action takes two participants and is performed on both of them, then it shows reciprocal action as (example 4), if the action happens by itself, without anyone's efforts, then it is a neutral verb. As can be observed in example 4, the verb *շարժվեց* has the affix -վ-, nonetheless, it is a neutral verb here, as the car 'moved' by itself.

It is interesting to note that neutral verbs correspond to the English middle voice or ergative verbs. In some cases, we have a thorough correspondence between the English and the Armenian versions. A case in point is the ergative verb *sell* (վաճառել). We should note down that this set of verbs can function as transitive verbs in both languages, like for instance *sell something* (վաճառել ինչ-որ մի բան (literal translation)) and they can also function as ergative verbs:

(6)   *Գիրքը*   *լավ է*   *վաճառվում:*

       Book (Nom)   well   sells.

       "The book sells well".

On the other hand, English is rich in types of passives, such as pseudo passives or otherwise called *get passives*, *have passives*, *embedded passives*, whereas in Armenian there is only one type of the passive voice.

3.1. Short and long passives

With regard to the inclusion or the omission of the agent, two types of passives are distinguished in English. The same holds for the Armenian passive. Though similar in terms of the types identified, they are rather different in terms of formation.

In English the agent is usually presented with the help of *by* for animate nouns and *with* if it is a means/instrument. In Armenian the approach is different. As Armenian is an inflective language, the 'relationship' of the words is presented through cases. The most common case

that the agent takes in Armenian is the ablative case (examples from A. Papoyan, Kh. Badikyan, 2003):

(7)   *Տրդատը*   *պատժվեց*   *պարսիկներից:*

Trdat (Nom)   Punished (was)   Persians (Ablative)

"Trdat was punished by the Persians".

However, there are instances when the agent can take other cases too. In the following example, the agent takes instrumental case.

(8)   *Աղջիկը*   *հմայված էր*   *տղայով:*

Girl (Nom)   infatuated (was)   boy (Instrumental).

"The girl was infatuated by the boy".

(9)   *Աշակերտը*   *հարգում*   *է*   *ուսուցչին:*

Pupil (Nom)   respects   teacher (Accusative).

"The pupil respects the teacher".

As can be seen from the examples, in English the agent is mostly accompanied by *by,* whereas in Armenian the agent takes different cases, namely ablative, instrumental and accusative.

3.2. Pragmatic aspect of English and Armenian passives

Comparing the English and Armenian passives in the light of pragmatics, one can say that they are rather alike. The only difference here is probably the fact, that in Armenian the pragmatic aspect is not studied as thoroughly and in depth as in English.

However, some linguists have addressed this issue (Jahukyan, 1974; Sahakyan, 2007; Sevak, 2009). Considering the opinions expressed by them, we can find some similarities between the pragmatic aspect of the English and Armenian passives: in both languages the passive is used to highlight a constituent of a sentence. For instance, the passive is used when the speaker wants to thematize the object (Granger, 1983; Pinker, 2014) in English, the Armenian passive also serves the same purpose: when the speaker wants to underline the logical object of the sentence (Jahukyan, 1974; Sevak, 2009). Another similarity that we have observed between these languages is that the passive is used when the doer of the action is unknown, when the doer of the action is redundant (as it can be easily elicited from the sentence) or when the speaker is eager to sound unbiased (Murcia, 1999; Sahakyan, 2007).

In general terms, we can say that many linguists (Granger, 1983; Weiner and Labov, 1983; Murcia, 1999; Huddleston, 2002; Cowan, 2008) consider the passive as a tool to structure and organize old and new information. Moreover, it is claimed that passive can be chosen to ensure the coherency of the utterance and to put the heavy constituents at the end of the sentence, to comply with the end-weight principle of the English information structure.

Both in English and Armenian the passive voice can be used to make sure that the coherency of the utterance is preserved. A case in point is the following example (example from Granger, 1983: 28).

(10) … *he*   *died*   *and*   *was buried*   *at Stoke Poges.*

       …նա   մահացավ   և   թաղվեց   Սթոք Փոգսում (Dative):

       He   died   and   buried (was)   at Stoke Poges.

"He died and was buried at Stoke Poges".

As we can see in the English example the second verb is in passive voice, which is done to ensure the coherency. The same can be observed in word-for-word Armenian translation, where the second verb is in the passive voice, the purpose of which is, like in English, to ensure the coherency.

4. Methodology

The method used for this research is Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (hereafter referred to CIA). The idea was instigated by Granger (1998). The approach has been developed due to the advent in computer technologies and corpus linguistics.

With the emergence of learner corpora there was a need for a methodological approach to investigate the data at hand. The researchers were interested in the learners' language and its specifics. There are two approaches to be considered in connection therewith: Contrastive Analysis (hereafter referred to CA) and Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis.

By definition, contrastive analysis compares, contrasts and studies the linguistic relationship between languages which could promote language acquisition and language learning methodologically and structurally (Gilquin, 2001; James, 1980; Willems et al., 2003). Because of its emphasis on comparing and contrasting language structures, CA is a prime candidate in a grammar or structure-focused language pedagogical approach.

CIA compares the interlanguage (the language produced by the learners) with the one produced by the Native Speakers. With the help of this method, it is possible not only to highlight the mistakes that the learners make, but also to underline the under or overuses. In the frames of CIA there are certain important features that are taken into account, such as learners' mother tongue, proficiency level, command of other foreign languages along with the interlanguage produced. Furthermore, there are some linguistic features that are also to be taken into account, e.g., spoken or written utterances, different genres, etc. Also, Granger (1998) highlights the importance of following the guidelines set by International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE).

CIA presupposes two types of comparisons: comparison between NS vs NNS languages and NNS vs NNS. The comparison of NNS interlanguage with NS is of utter importance, because it serves the purpose of improving learners' proficiency of the language by highlighting the differences of their interlanguage with the NS, which, in its turn, will bring their interlanguage closer to the NS norms (Granger, 2007, p. 13). Thus, with the help of CIA, we have compared the usage patterns of passives by NS and NNS. Firstly, with help of quantitative research method we have retrieved the frequency figures of different types of passives by NS and NNS, which aimed at underlining the under or overuse of passives by the NNS in comparison with NS.

After collecting the quantitative data, we have applied qualitative research method, in order to understand the learners' usage patterns. Riazi (2016) emphasizes, qualitative research is a broad term that encompasses a variety of methodologies derived from diverse theoretical and disciplinary traditions. Qualitative research uses narrative data (words as opposed to numbers) and qualitative data analysis to draw findings on the study problem (nonstatistical analysis). Typically, qualitative researchers accomplish this by observing, describing, interpreting, and evaluating. Thus, by observing, interpreting and describing the differences between the interlanguage and NS language, we have tried to understand to what extent their L1 (Armenian) has had an impact on their L2 production by delving into the specifics of their L1. Special attention has been given to the use of short and long passives and to the pragmatic aspect of

passives to test whether the hypothesis that advanced learners can retain the form but not the function of the form is applicable to the Armenian learners too.

Corpus compilation and research variables

The corpora under scrutiny are the LOCNESS (the Louvain Corpus of Native Speaker's Essays) and the Armenian Learners Corpus (compiled by us). As the essays written by the Armenian learners were comparatively shorter than the ones of NS, we have taken 30 essays by the Armenian learners and 16 essays from L1 users of English (with equal number of words).

LOCNESS is the compilation of British pupils' A level essays, British university students' essays and American university students' essays. In total it consists of 324.304 words.

Because there was no Armenian learners' corpora, we undertook the compilation of one in line with ICLE (International Corpus of Learner English) guidelines: firstly, the students were requested to fill in the learner's profile, where they had to provide information about their mother tongue, the language of instruction (henceforth LoI) of their educational institutions, e.g., primary, secondary, high school, university, the mother tongue of their parents, the language spoken at home, the amount of years that they have been studying English, etc. Next, they had to write argumentative essays by themselves, without anyone's help, with no timing. The students were allowed to use some reference tools, if needed, for instance, dictionaries, grammar reference books or some Internet sources. The word count of essays according to the ICLE guidelines was to be 500 at least, but some of the students' works are shorter than 500 words.

The students taking part in the research project are from Yerevan State University (second- and third-year Bachelor's students, and Master's students) and from French University in Armenia (first- and second-year Bachelor's students). Their level of English ranges from upper-intermediate to advanced level. The learners' profiles reveal the following data incorporated in the Table 1.

Table 1.
Data on students taking part in the research project

Data	Language	Number of students/30
Total number of students		30
Mother tongue of students spoken at home	Armenian	30
Other languages spoken at home	Russian	8
Alternative language spoken at home	English	2
Knowledge of at least 1 foreign language	French, Russian, German, Spanish	20

Note: Data driven from students' profiles

The years of studying English range from 9-13 years (schoolyears and university years all together). Most of the students haven't lived in an English-speaking country. Only 3 claimed having lived in the USA (1 student for 11 years, the other one for 2 weeks) and UK (for 2 weeks). Most of the students (99%) mentioned that the LoI at school was Armenian, with only seven reporting Russian as their LoI.

5. Data analysis

As it has already been stated, for this research paper the number of words taken from both corpora is approximately 9000 per each. The software used for retrieving the data is Lancsbox, developed by the University of Lancaster. The choice of the software is explained by the fact that it offers a wide range for grammar pattern search too. It should be noted, though, that the software allows only the search for passive constructions (*be* passives only), the other types of

passives, notably *get* passives, impersonal passives and bare passives have been retrieved manually from the PAST PARTICIPLE search results section.

The most frequent category among L1 users of English was *be* passive (48 times) making up 64%, followed by bare passives (21 times) with 28%. Impersonal passives and *get* passives were the least preferred types of passives, accounting for (4 times) 5% and 3% (2 times) accordingly.
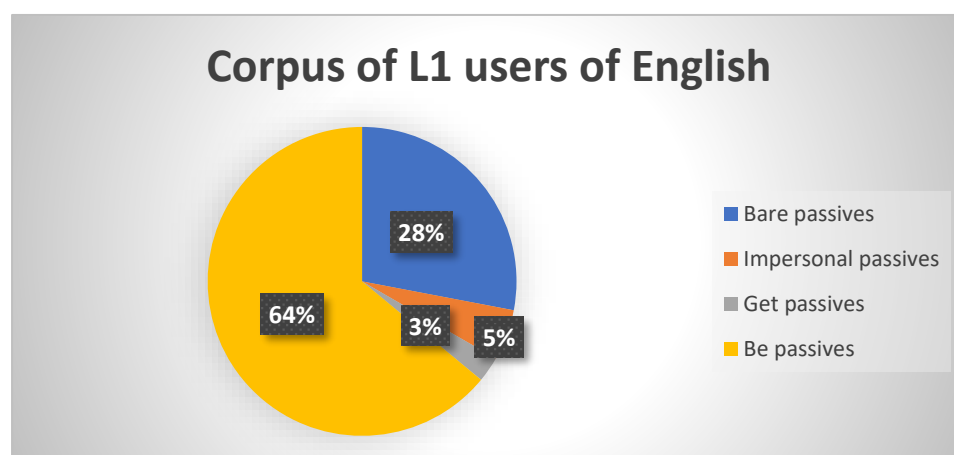

Figure 1. Patterns of PV Usage by L1 Users of English

As far as the analysis of the Armenian Learners' Corpus is concerned, it yielded results similar to the one by L1 users of English.
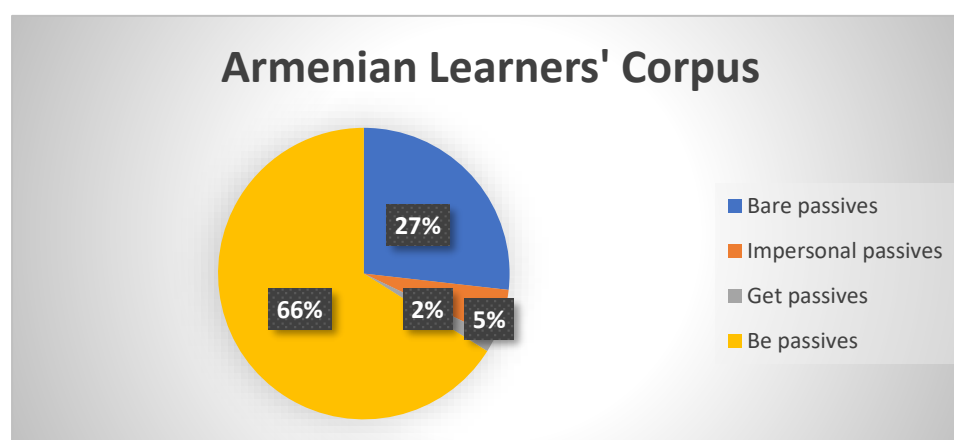

Figure 2. Patterns of PV Usage by Armenian learners

When we compare the data obtained from two corpora, we can see an interesting pattern: Armenian learners, in comparison with the L1 users of English, underused passives. For instance, in 9000 tokens *be* passives were used 48 times by L1 users of English, whereas Armenian learners used them 37 times. The same holds for the use of bare passives: L1 users of English used them 21 times, Armenian Learners-15 times. Both L1 users of English and Armenian learners used impersonal and *get* passives rather rarely.
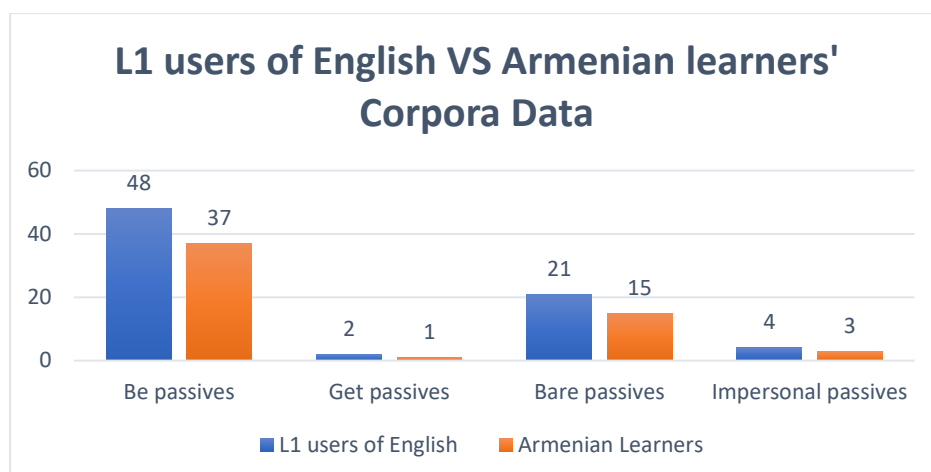
Figure 3. Comparative Analysis of Patterns of PV Usage by L1 Users of English and Armenian learners

6. Discussions

6.1. Short and long passives

Conducting qualitative research of the data amassed from both corpora, some specific features are singled out. Firstly, in L1 users' corpus, 11 out of 75, were long passives, the rest were short passives. These are the cases when the students mention the agent in order to put special emphasis on that constituent of the sentence. Below are some examples

> (11) The rail service and the bus service are normally owned <u>by different companies.</u>
> (12) Billions are spent <u>by the government alone</u> trying to keep
> (13) Bypass was introduced but is used <u>by very few cars.</u>

As can be seen from the examples, the agents have important role in the sentence, that is the reason why they are included in the sentences. It is done to draw the readers' attention to the doer of the action, to comply with the information structure principle in English: the sentence starts with old information which is followed by new information. Thus, "different companies", "the government", "very few cars" represent new information.

The same tendency is noted in the Armenian learners' corpus: the number of short passives outweighs the long ones. The figures here are different, though: only one out of 56 cases is a long passive.

> (14) Music, for example, is increasingly used by people to battle depression…

Considering this example, it is evident that there was no need for the inclusion of the agent, as "the people" is very general here, and could be easily inferred from the sentence. Moreover, one can clearly observe that it is not included in the sentence to highlight that component or to present new information, as in the case of NS.

6.2. Tense forms

Another specific feature that gets attention is the use of the tense forms of the passive voice. In NS corpus, the majority of cases of the passives (64 out of 75) are in present tense form (with different aspects: present, continuous and perfect), and only 11 cases were in past tense.

> (15) If each household in Britain was only allowed

(16) If the services were integrated, there would be a…
(17) If public transport was improved, more might use it
(18) If cars were banned from the city center…

Interestingly enough, about 90% of past tense usage was in conditional sentences, in particular 2nd conditional.

Likewise, in the Armenian Learners' corpus, the number of past passives was really low, nearly two times less than the one of the LOCNESS (with 5 and 11 times respectively). The rest was in present tense forms: present simple, present continuous and present perfect.

(19) Many people have died from drugs that were tested on animals and declared safe for human.
(20) That all things were done for our health.
(21) In order to sum up what was said, I would like to point out.

6.3. The use of form

It is interesting to note, that Armenian learners have used the passive voice rather frequently (6.2 times per 1000 tokens), though comparatively less than the NS. It can be hypothesized by the fact that they have acquired passive voice as a formulaic structure, thus, in terms of the form, they have managed to use it accurately.

It is no surprise why *be* passive was the dominant type among Armenian learners. Firstly, it is conditioned by the fact that even at advanced level, the main type of passive voice included in the curricula of both universities is *be* passive. Secondly, as mentioned above, we can hypothesize that they study it as a formula.

However, it is of interest to note that Armenian learners have also used impersonal passives, such as 'it is believed, it is considered, it is often argued'. These structures are mostly unperceivable for the Armenian learners, because there are no similar structures in their mother tongue. Though used rather rarely (merely four times), they have managed to use them accurately, which can be attributed to the idiomatic feature of these constructions.

Another interesting fact that catches attention is the use of bare passives. Though it is not given due importance in theoretical grammar books, Huddleston & Pullum, 2002 and Wanner, 2009 state that they occur in such syntactic environments where there is no need for the finite verb to have a tense form and a subject verb agreement (Wanner, 2009, p. 83). That is to say, they mostly occur in modifiers, adjuncts and verb complements. Moreover, it is mentioned that the subject can be explicit or non-explicit, which is conditioned by the position of the bare passive.

The use of bare passives by NS comes as no surprise, as it is their L1 and they master the function of the form of bare passives. However, the fact that Armenian learners also made use of bare passives rather frequently, is rather astonishing, as in upper-intermediate and advanced level textbooks rarely can one find the definition or the distinction of bare passives as a type of the passive voice. Let us examine some examples of bare passives used by the Armenian learners:

(22) …who can properly use the deeds created by humankind…
(23) Mankind couldn't imagine the technologies invented and still being invented…
(24) …along with many problems caused by increasing population of the Earth.
(25) …creating artificial organism designed to function like a real body.
(26) …develop specific skills needed to go with the times…

Looking at the examples we can clearly say that all the bare passives are used as participial relative clause. To understand better the causes behind this frequent use of bare passives, it is important to look at the learners' L1 Armenian. In Armenian there is a similar concept, relative participial clause, which, apart from different syntactic functions, also has defining function and can include verbs in the passive voice. For instance, if we translate the example 22 into Armenian, using literal translation, we will convey the meaning from source language to the target language thoroughly.

(27) Ովքեր կարող են պատշաճ կերպով օգտագործել արարքներր՝ ստեղծված մարդկանց կողմից:

In this example not only have we translated the words but also, we have "transferred" the grammar structure from the source to the target language and the sentence in the target language thoroughly represents the information of the source language. This is conditioned by the fact that there is a similar relative participial clause in Armenian which has the same function as that of English. Thus, the frequent use of bare passives by Armenian learners is attributed not to the fact that the students are so advanced and master this type of passive too, but to their L1 specifics.

6.4. Pragmatic use

Looking at the pragmatic aspect of the use of the passive voice by the Armenian learners and NS, some differences call for attention. In the Armenian Learners' Corpus, the overwhelming majority (52 out of 56) of the passive voice cases have the purpose of thematizing the logical object, and there are four cases when the passive voice was used to ensure the coherency of the utterance. In NS Corpus (LOCNESS) the image is thoroughly different: 65 cases out of 75 of the passive voice are used to thematize the logical object, 8 cases for ensuring the cohesion of the utterance and only twice passive is used to comply with the end-weight principle of information structure in English.
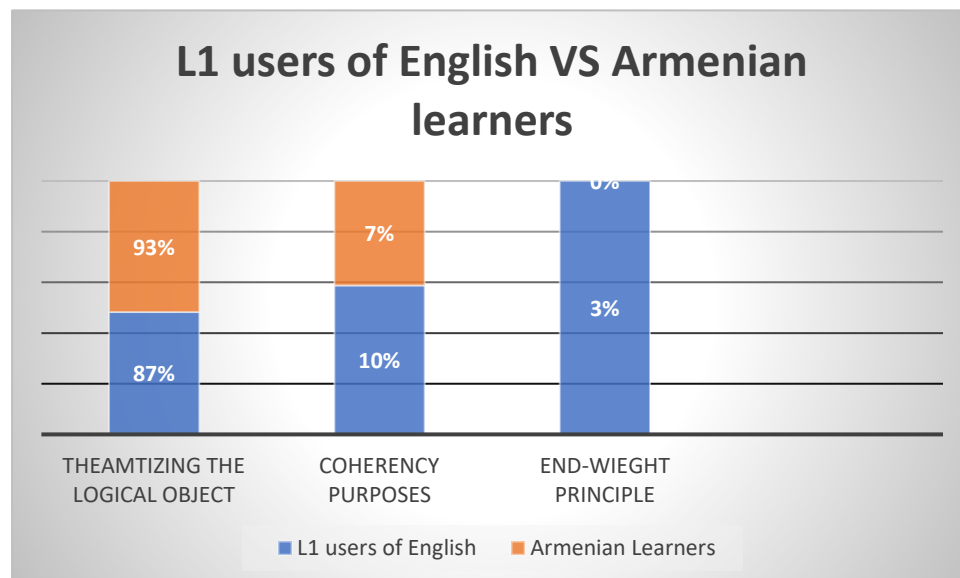

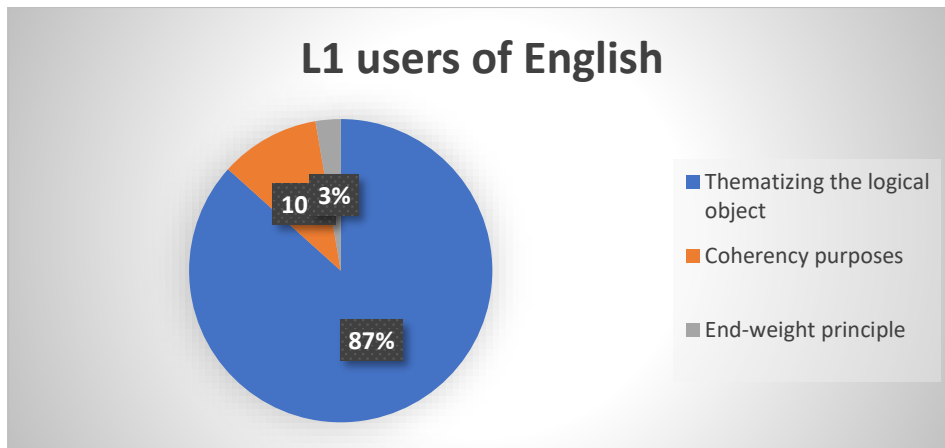*Figure 4.* Pragmatic Aspect of the Use of the Passive Voice by the Armenian Learners and L1 Users of English

Figure 5. Pragmatic Aspect of the Use of the Passive Voice by L1 Users of English
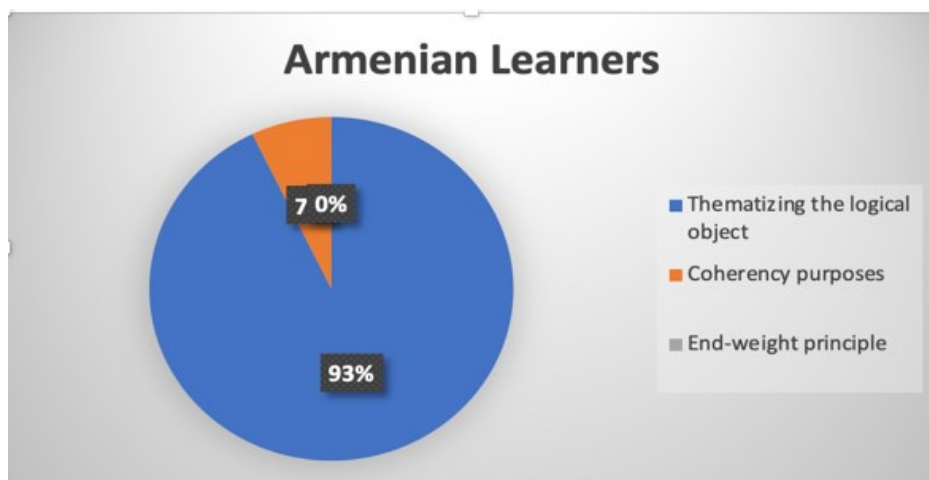

Figure 6. Pragmatic Aspect of the Use of the Passive Voice by Armenian Learners

Thematizing the logical object. In both corpora, the passive voice is mostly used to prioritize the logical object of the sentence over the logical subject, as the latter can be either inferred from the context, or may be redundant, or unknown, or too general.

Armenian learners' examples:

> (28) If you are appreciated, you are able to succeed…
> (29) …more animals are consumed than used in scientific research.
> (30) To sum up what was said…

NS' examples:

> (31) Many things have been tried to reverse this.
> (32) Hundreds of people are killed on the roads…

In the examples above the passive voice is evidently used to avoid stating the agent of the action for several reasons. The passive voice is used in (32) to avoid mentioning the doer of the action, in (28, 29, 31) the writer refers to people in general, that is the reason why passive is used, in (30) the agent is easily inferable, so the writer uses the passive voice to avoid personifying himself/herself.

Ensuring coherency. The passive voice is also used for coherency purposes by both NS and Armenian learners. Though with significantly lower frequency compared to NS, Armenian learners have managed to use passive for formulating coherent sentences.

Armenian learners' examples:

> (33) Many people have died from drugs that were tested on animals and declared safe for human use.
> (34) …experiments have no good intentions and are never made to help any creature.
> (35) In this fast pacing world, where new products are developed every day and are in need for testing before being offered to the society, animals become the victims of testing every time.
> (36) Using animals for research is still not good and it is done to help save the humanity.

Native speakers' examples:

> (37) …routes became unprofitable and so were closed.
> (38) …a bypass was introduced but is used by very few cars.
> (39) The money that is spent on building roads should instead be spent on improving public transport.
> (40) The severe shortage of revenue which is spent in doing up the image of the railway means declining standards…

These are the instances of the passive voice that aim at ensuring the coherency. In examples (33, 40) we observe 'linear progression' (instigated by Granger, 1983), which means that the rheme of the first clause becomes the theme of the next one. For instance, in examples (33, 40) *drugs*, *revenue*, the rhemes of the first sentence, become the theme of the following clause. Let us consider the cases when the speaker chose to use active instead of passive voice:

> (41) *Many people have died from drugs that researchers have tested on animals and have declared safe for human use.
> (42) *The severe shortage of revenue that people spent in doing up the image of the railway means declining standards…

These sentences would not be coherent, as can be clearly observed in the examples above. Readers have already perceived *drugs, revenue* after the first clause, so they are already the themes for the second clause which makes them easier to be "digested". Pinker explains this by referring to the cognitive psychology, "people learn by integrating new information into their existing web of knowledge", (Pinker 2014, p. 135).

The rest of the examples comply with the principle of continuous progression (Granger, 1983): one subject takes several predicates. For instance, in examples (34) *experiments* is the subject, but there are more than one verbs/predicates for it, so, to ensure the cohesion of the predicates with the subject, passive comes to rescue. The same holds for examples (35, 36, 37, 38, 39).

End-weight principle. Many scholars (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston, 2002; Cowan, 2008) consider the end-weight principle as one of the factors determining the use of the passive voice. According to the principle, the 'lengthy' and 'heavy' constituents tend to occur at the end of the sentence. It is interesting to note that Armenian learners have not used passives to this end, which can be explained by the fact that there is no such concept in their L1. However, two cases of end-weight principle were observed by NS.

> (43) These views are supported by cases like the James Bulger case, and the Fred and Mary West case.
> (44) £ billions are spent by the government alone trying to keep the UK roads in as best a condition as possible.

It is lucid from the examples above that the agents are much heavier than the subject of the sentence, that is the reason why they are placed at the end of the sentence and passive is very handy in this case to ensure the coherence of the sentence and to present the new information. It is also explained by the fact, that the old information is usually short, and there is no need to present it in detail as it is already known, whereas the new information needs some specifications and details, that is the reason that the latter is usually longer.

7. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, we may conclude that the hypothesis that learners' usage patterns differ from those of L1 users of English has been proven. The main differences between the Armenian learners and L1 users of English are the following:

- Armenian learners tend to use passive voice less frequently than the L1 users of English. The frequency rate per 1000 tokens for the Armenian learners is 6.2, whereas the one by L1 users of English is 8.3.
- Both Armenian learners and L1 users of English use *be* passive more than the other types of passives (L1 users of English-48 times, Armenian learners-37 times).
- The second more frequent type in both corpora is bare passives. The L1 users of English are inclined to use more bare passives than Armenian learners (L1 users of English-21 times, Armenian learners-15 times).
- The frequent use (15 times) of bare passives by the Armenian learners can be attributed to their L1, where there is a similar grammar structure with a similar function.
- The least frequently used types of passives in both corpora are *get* passives and impersonal passives (L1 users of English-2 times, 4 times respectively, Armenian learners-1 time, 4times respectively).
- In all the categories of the passive types, L1 users of English had much higher figures than the Armenian learners.
- The number of short passives outweighs that of long ones in both corpora (L1 users of English-11 long passives, 64 short passives, Armenian learners-1 long passive, 55 short passives).
- In both corpora the passive voice is mostly used to thematize the logical object, because the agent either can be inferred from the context, or may be redundant or unknown.
- In both corpora the second most common reason to use passive is to ensure the coherency.
- The principle of end-weight was a determining factor for the passive voice use only in the corpus of L1 users of English (only two cases).

Taking into account all the points mentioned above, the results yielded land robust support to the hypothesis put forth by Carroll et al (2000), according to which advanced learners do not have any problems in terms of the acquisition of the grammar forms, nonetheless, when it comes to the function, they very often rely on their L1.

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