

# **Syntactic Features of Written and Spoken English**

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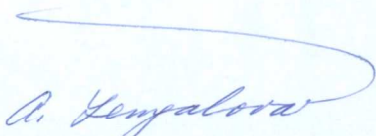
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá syntaktickými jevy s ohledem na jejich výskyt v mluveném a psaném jazyce. Práce nejprve zahrnuje charakteristiku syntaxe a obecný popis rozdílů mezi psaným a mluveným jazykem. Následující část je zaměřena na jednotlivé druhy syntaktických struktur a vysvětluje jejich užití v rámci mluvené a psané formy jazyka.

Klíčová slova: psaný jazyk, mluvený jazyk, syntax, syntaktické rozdíly, syntaktická struktura

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis concerns syntactic phenomena with respect to their occurrence in spoken and written language. At first, the thesis covers characterization of syntax and general description of differences between written and spoken language. The following part is concentrated on particular kinds of syntactic structures and explains their usage within spoken and written form of language.

Keywords: written language, spoken language, syntax, syntactic differences, syntactic structure

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## INTRODUCTION

Language belongs to a very powerful means of communication. It offers many different ways how to express people's ideas, opinions and feelings. As a complex system, language also provides various areas of its exploration. One of the fundamental disciplines contributing to understanding this complex system is syntax, on which this thesis is concentrated. Another important feature of language is the possibility to recognize its diverse variations. Differentiation of the variations is based on various points of view, such as the region, where the language is used, purpose of its use, etc. For this thesis, the key point of view represents differentiation between spoken variation and written variation. In English, there are many different syntactic structures and their usage within written and spoken language differs. Some of them are more typically used in spoken language and some in written one.

This bachelor thesis is thus focused on syntactic choices within written and spoken language. The thesis begins with brief characterization of syntax as a linguistic discipline. Further, it concerns general differences between speech and writing and continues with specification of the most obvious aspects, which differentiate one variation from the other. The following part is crucial. Purpose of this part is to define those kinds of syntactic structures, where the contrast regarding their occurrence in speech and writing is most noticeable. Each kind of structures is accompanied by examples demonstrating how particular structures look. Most of these examples were taken from the British National Corpus, alternatively from the Corpus of Contemporary American English or from relevant literature. Another important point is to explain the usage of particular kinds of syntactic structures within spoken and written language.

The goal of this thesis is to imagine, to what extent spoken and written language vary from the syntactic point of view, and to understand the reasons of such differences.

## 1 SYNTAX IN GENERAL

Syntax, as a term, has its origin in Ancient Greece. The term has been derived from the word *sýntaxis*. Literal translation of this word can be *arrangement*. (Matthews 1981, 1)

Along with morphology, syntax is an inseparable part of grammar. It is a linguistic discipline, which concerns structure of sentences. It means that this study investigates ways how words are clustered together in order to create larger units, such as phrases and sentences. (Radford 2004, 1)

Within the purview of other linguistic disciplines, syntax plays the crucial role. It is because sentences are significant for creation of texts. And texts are, in terms of linguistics, the largest units. (Kreyer 2010, 1)

Table 1. Position of syntax

Sounds	Phonetics/Phonology
Morphemes	Morphology/Lexicology
Words	
<b>Phrases</b>	<b>Syntax</b>
<b>Clauses</b>	
<b>Sentences</b>	
Texts	Text-linguistics

*Source:* Data from Kreyer 2010, 1

Syntax recognizes certain rules, which are fundamental for structure of sentences. On the basis of these rules, larger units are formed from smaller units. Thus, sentences can be formed by clauses, phrases and words, clauses are formed by phrases, and phrases are formed by words, and all these formations occur according to specific patterns. (Kreyer 2010, 1)

## 2 SPOKEN AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Nowadays, language is perceived as a heterogeneous phenomenon. It is because of the fact that there is a certain amount of varieties in terms of language. Thus, language, as a system of communication, may occur in various forms, such as spoken and written. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 9-10)

According to Halliday, spoken form of language can be represented by written form of language. It means that anything, what is expressed by speech, is also possible to express by means of writing. Thus, writing can be seen as an option of representing spoken form of language. Representation of spoken language by written language is performed via using words, which are codified, and also via coding words, which are not codified yet. Such words, which are not already codified, can be new words in language and also some language mistakes, which, for instance, people do when they are speaking. (Halliday 1989, 29)

But although written language is able to represent speech, in spoken language, there are still some aspects which cannot be expressed in written language to a certain extent. These aspects include intonation, rhythm, loudness, etc. Nevertheless, it is possible to substitute some of these aspects by means of punctuation in written language. (Halliday 1989, 30, 32)

However, it is not possible to regard written form of language as speech, which is simply noted somewhere. Spoken form of language can be represented by written form in order to investigate the spoken one. Therefore, speech which is transcribed into written form does not show sample of written language. (Halliday 1989, 41)

### 2.1 General differences between written and spoken language

Spoken language and written language represent that kind of communication forms between which significant differences can be noticed. But, it is not possible to say that one of these forms is more developed, or more useful, than the other. In terms of importance, usefulness, or state of development, these two forms are balanced because both are used according to certain purpose of language user. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 10)

Speech and writing are transmitted in distinct ways. Transmission via sound-waves is the transmission way of spoken language. It implies that speech has its source in speaking. Reception of speech is realized via hearing. On the other hand, transmission of writing is realized using letters and other marks used in writing. Thus, reading is way of receiving written form of language. (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 10)

Production of speech is temporary. It means that speech takes place in actual time. By contrast, production of writing lasts longer than speech. Then, the result of the writing is created and this result indicates permanency of writing, which means that what is written can be read anytime. These differences between written and spoken language imply that, in terms of speech, immediate production and comprehension are demanding. From the point of view of written form of language, it is possible to check the written text and then rewrite it. (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 10-11)

Contrary to spoken language, written language is often more objective and abstract. Basically, it is used to provide some information about something. Thus its elemental function is referential. Writing is mostly planned and intended for a certain purpose. The writer has the opportunity to select certain language means, and hereby, he can express his message correspondingly. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 12, 31)

## **2.2 Levels of comparing written and spoken language**

The most significant differences between spoken and written language, they are not only connected with sound system of spoken language and graphic system of written language. There are other obvious differences which are important in terms of investigating these two variations. The point is that these two forms of language vary from the point of view of vocabulary and grammar as well. (Crystal 2002, 94)

### **2.2.1 Sound/graphic level of comparing written and spoken language**

As mentioned, spoken language has certain features including intonation and rhythm for example. These features are called prosodic. Other aspects of prosody are stress, pauses, voice range, pace of speech, etc. Spoken language has also paralinguistic features. This is called body language which is represented by facial expressions, gestures, laughter, etc., so they are nonverbal. Function of paralinguistic features is to complete message content. (Halliday 1989, 30; Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 10-11)

Regarding written language, there is number of graphic features that are important for this form of language. Graphic features include mainly organization of a text and its highlighting. Both are significant means in terms of expressing certain meaning. Other features, like front size and type, are used for attracting attention of a reader. Features of written text, concerning its visual form, are important also for clear arrangement of the text. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 32-33)

### 2.2.2 Lexical level of comparing written and spoken language

“Lexicology is the part of linguistics, dealing with the vocabulary of a language and the properties of words as the main units of language.” (Veselá) The term lexicology has been derived from two Greek words *lexis*, which means word, and *logos*, which means learning. Summation of all words in language is represented by the term *vocabulary*. (Veselá)

There are differences between spoken and written language in terms of vocabulary as well. Vocabulary of spoken language is inclined to be more informal and restricted than vocabulary of written language. By contrast, vocabulary of written language includes words with more exact meaning. Sometimes, spoken language contains words which can be hardly found in written language (e.g. nonsense words). (Crystal 2002, 94) Vocabulary of spoken language can be, for instance, characterized by:

- Simple words, which often have just one or two syllables, because such words are more easily perceived by recipient (e.g. *go, get, give*), complicated words are more typical for written language
- Vague expressions (e.g. *probably, a bit, kind of*)
- Slang words (e.g. *wishy-washy, crash out, skint*)
- Interjections (e.g. *oh, wow, bang*)
- Some types of pronouns, mainly demonstrative, relative and reflexive (e.g. *that, which, myself*)
- Discourse markers (e.g. *anyway, well, right*)

(Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 24-25)

Spoken language and written language also differ from the point of view of lexical density. Written language is characterized by higher lexical density than spoken language. In that case, spoken language is lexically sparse. It means that, in comparison to written language, spoken language mostly shows lower quantity of lexical items, called *content words*, which means items that are part of open system. It is a system, under which new words can be added, and includes, for example, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. On the other hand, this form of language shows higher quantity of grammatical items, called *function words*. They are part of closed system which includes, for example, pronouns, conjunctions and determiners. (Halliday 1989, 61-63)

Another difference between spoken and written language is its degree of vagueness. Spoken language is often more vague than the written one. Higher degree of vagueness in spoken language has several reasons:

- Lack of time to find appropriate words within speech, which is not prepared in advance
- Impossibility to understand too much accurate information
- Expectation of listener that he can help with interpretation of a message
- Possibility to express certain parts of a message nonverbally
- Close connection of context and meaning of a message

(Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 24)

### 2.2.3 Grammatical level of comparing written and spoken language

The term *grammar* generally covers two linguistic disciplines, which are intertwined in many respects. One of these disciplines is called *morphology*, which is a study of inner words structure, and the other discipline, called *syntax*, is a study of sentence structure. (Quirk et al. 1985, 12)

According to Halliday, “the spoken language is, in fact, no less structured and highly organized than the written”. (Halliday 1989, 79) It implies that spoken form, as well as the written one, is complex in its own way. (Halliday 1989, 79) Complexity of spoken language is given by non-fluency of speech and also by syntactic features which are not always clear. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 15) Within spoken language, there are often no evident linking words, but speech frequently includes various fillers, hesitations, repetitions, etc. (Eyres 2000, 169) In spoken language, repeated use of identical structures of sentences and their altering is typical. On the other hand, writing is distinguished by linearity, thus individual sentences follow each other in a logical way. Written form of language is also characterized by compactness which means that written language is often condensed. Sentences within written language are usually long, and clauses have clear beginning as well as the end. Boundaries of individual clauses are marked by using punctuation and linking words. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 31, 34-35)

The above mentioned compactness of written language is related to nominalization, a process of converting a verb into a noun. It means that, within written language, there is a tendency to use nouns and adjectives, which are modifiers of nouns, more likely than verbs. Thus, in comparison to written language, spoken language is characterized by more frequent usage of verbs and also adverbs, which are modifiers of verbs. (Urbanová and Oakland 2002, 32; Bieber, Conrad and Leech 2002, 23)

### 3 SYNTACTIC LEVEL OF WRITTEN AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE

#### 3.1 Marginal structures

In English, there are various types of short structures, which can be attached to a clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 136) The attribute *marginal* refers to the fact that they can be most often found in position preceding the clause or following the clause. However, it is possible to find some of them inserted into the structure of a clause.

##### 3.1.1 Dislocation

Dislocation is a type of very short constructions, which can be supplemented to a clause. These constructions are commonly represented by a noun phrase. Moreover, within the clause, to which dislocated constructions are supplemented, an expression substituting the construction is situated. It is usually a pronoun. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1408)

On the basis of its location, it is possible to distinguish two types of dislocation, namely *left dislocation* and *right dislocation*. It indicates that left dislocation refers to placing a supplemented element at the beginning of the clause. Therefore, a substituting element follows and it occurs in corresponding place within a clause. On the other hand, right dislocation concerns placing a supplemented element at the end of the clause. The substituting element thus precedes the dislocated element. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1310) In addition, both types of dislocation can be supplemented to declarative or interrogative clauses. (Bieber et al. 1999, 957)

[1] Sharon, *she* plays bingo on Sunday night. (Bieber et al. 1999, 957)

[2] *That picture of the frog*, where is *it*? (Bieber et al. 1999, 957)

[3] *It* makes you wonder, you know, all this unemployment. (Bieber et al. 1999, 139)

[4] Did *they* have any, the kids? (Bieber et al. 1999, 957)

##### 3.1.1.1 Usage within speech and writing

Using dislocated structures is predominantly characteristic of informal spoken language. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1310) It is due to the fact that this phenomenon carries out certain functions, which are convenient for conversation. Regarding left dislocation, it functions as means for specifying the topic. Thus it facilitates comprehension of recipient. Function of right dislocation consists in clarifying the referential expression within the clause or its highlighting. (Bieber et al. 1999, 138-139)



### 3.1.2 Comment clauses

The term *comment clause* refers to other short structures, which can be involved within the main clause. Purpose of these structures is making a comment to what is stated there. In terms of its position, comment clauses can be placed in front, in the middle, as well as in the end of the main clause. (Leech 1991, 83)

[5] *You know, perhaps there's another way of evangelizing it.* (BNC)

[6] *She could certainly offer any, you know, assistance in whatever way.* (BNC)

[7] *But some of it's out of date, you know.* (BNC)

According to Bieber et al., comment clauses usually have the subject which predominantly occurs in first or second person. Concerning verb, it is most commonly found in present tense. (Bieber et al. 1999, 197) Quirk et al. highlights also comment clauses beginning with *as*. Furthermore, he mentions other types of comment clauses, namely clauses which have form of nominal relative clause, infinitive clause, *ing*-clause and *ed*-clause. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1112-1113)

[8] *I mean, it's up to you.* (BNC)

[9] *Because, as you know, if you fail twice you're sure to fail the third time.* (BNC)

[10] *What's more, my husband is ill, and I can't afford to buy his medicine.* (BNC)

[11] *And to be honest I wouldn't have argued if anyone had said whole day.* (BNC)

[12] *But generally speaking I'm not very happy about norms.* (BNC)

[13] *Stated differently, if e did happen then so did c.* (BNC)

#### 3.1.2.1 Usage within speech and writing

Regarding usage of comment clauses, each of type mentioned above includes phrases, which are broadly used. Some may occur in speech, and some in writing. However, it is possible to say that those which can be found in speech are used more frequently. Comment clauses are therefore more typical for spoken language. (Bieber et al. 1999, 197; Quirk et al. 1985, 1113)

### 3.1.3 Question tags

Question tags, also referred to as interrogative tags, are very short structures which can be attached to the end of a clause, most frequently to the declarative clause. The role of this

type of structures is to affect the recipient to make him agree with some statement. (Bieber et al. 1999, 139, 208) Thus it is possible to say that it has aiding character. (Quirk et al. 1985, 810)

This structure is formed by an operator (i.e. auxiliary *be*, *have*, etc.) and the subject. It means that question tag does not contain whole verb phrase of preceding clause, but it contains the same operator which is included within the verb phrase. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 51) But if the preceding clause does not include any operator, auxiliary *do* is used in the question tag. In terms of subject of question tag, it is typically a pronoun which is in accordance to subject of the previous clause. Therefore, it corresponds to its number, person and gender. (Quirk et al. 1985, 810) It means that when a pronoun occurs in the clause as the subject, the same pronoun should be contained in the question tag. But in case that the clause contains subject, which is other than pronoun, it is necessary to choose pronoun corresponding with the subject of the clause to represent subject in the following question tag. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 893)

[14] *It is yours, isn't it?*

[15] *The car is yours, isn't it?*

[16] *The car runs great, doesn't it?*

Regarding question tags, issue of polarity is significant. It is possible to recognize two types of question tags according to polarity, which are called *reversed polarity tags* and *constant polarity tags*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 892) Generally, negative question tag is attached to the clause which is positive and vice versa. (Bieber et al. 1999, 208) This is the case of reversed polarity tags. Nevertheless, there are cases when polarity of the question tag is the same as polarity of the clause to which question tag is attached. And these cases represent constant polarity tags. However, constant polarity tags are mostly positive which means that positive question tag is attached to positive clause. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 892) Such cases occur when speaker shows that he came to a conclusion due to the something what has been said previously. Such structures may often start with discourse markers, such as *oh* or *so*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 812)

[17] *So the car is yours, is it?*

### 3.1.3.1 *Question tags added to imperatives and exclamations*

Apart from declarative clauses, question tags can be also added to imperative clauses. It can be used for softening the imperative clause. In this case, operator *will* and subject *you* are often used to make positive question tag. And operator *won't* is often used for creation of negative question tag. (Quirk et al. 1985, 813)

[18] *Turn the light on, will you?*

[19] *Turn the light on, won't you?*

However, it is also possible to use combinations of other forms of operator and subject to make question tag in imperative sentence, for example *can't you* or *shall we*. (Bieber et al. 1999, 210)

[20] *Turn the light on, can't you?*

[21] *Let's do this, shall we?*

Question tags can be attached to exclamations as well. It can be added to both exclamations, which contain the verb, and exclamation, which does not contain the verb. (Quirk et al. 1985, 813)

[22] *What a nice car it is, isn't it?*

[23] *What a nice car, isn't it?*

### 3.1.3.2 *Other options for creation of question tag*

It is possible to use also other options to make a question tag apart from strict combination of operator and pronoun. Form of these question tags remains the same regardless of whether previous clause is positive or negative. (Quirk et al. 1985, 814) Such expressions can be for example *right*, *OK* or *don't you think*. (Bieber et al. 1999, 210)

[24] *He can/can't do it, right?*

[25] *I will/won't do it, OK?*

[26] *He will/won't do it, don't you think?*

### 3.1.3.3 *Usage within speech and writing*

Question tags can be found predominantly in spoken language. In view of the fact, that these structures function as device, which help to achieve agreement, presence of speaker and recipient of his message is expected. Therefore, question tags occur mostly in conversation between two or more people. (Bieber et al. 1999, 139, 1080)

### 3.1.4 **Vocatives**

Vocatives are noun phrase constructions which can be added to the structures of clauses in order to select recipient of a message. They are used for determination of relation between people who are involved in conversation. (Bieber et al. 1999, 140, 1108) It means that there are several options which can be used to address other people. These options may be divided according to degree of closeness between people into friendly, very friendly and casual, distant, and very respectful. (Leech 1991, 276) Concerning its position, vocatives can be located in initial, final, and also medial position within a sentence. (Quirk et al. 1985, 829)

[27] *Dad, what are you doing here?*

[28] *What are you doing here, dad?*

[29] *Oh, dad, what are you doing here?*

#### 3.1.4.1 *Usage within speech and writing*

It is assumed that vocatives are more commonly used within spoken language. Especially, first-name vocatives can be noticed to be most frequent. Using vocatives within conversation have several reasons: attracting somebody's attention and, as mentioned, selection of recipient and strengthening relationship with the recipient. (Bieber et al. 1999, 1111-1112)

## 3.2 **Questions**

### 3.2.1 **Yes-no questions**

Yes-no question can be defined as question which requests answer including either confirmation or refusal of content of the question. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 48) It means that anticipated answer of the recipient may be *yes* or *no* to indicate the reality. However, it is also possible to answer in another way instead of clear confirmation or refusal. Actually,

other potential answers may be, for instance, *maybe* or *surely*. This type of answer shows the extent to what the recipient is sure. The answer may also contain some other supplementary information apart from confirming or refusing statement. (Bieber et al. 1999, 206)

In terms of structure of yes-no question, it is ordinarily composed of an operator which is located at the beginning of a clause. It means that operator precedes the subject which immediately follows. In position of the operator, there can be located, for example, the verb *be* or *have* in appropriate form. In some cases, verb phrase does not incorporate an item which can be used for the role of an operator. In such cases, the verb *do* is used. (Quirk et al. 1985, 807) However, there is often ellipsis within yes-no questions. (Bieber et al. 1999, 206)

[30] *Has he paid the bill?*

[31] *Did she like it?*

[32] *Anything else?* (BNC)

[33] *Got what you want?* (BNC)

Special case of yes-no questions are *declarative questions*. Such questions have word order as it is in declarative clauses. Difference consists in punctuation and its intonation. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 868)

[34] *So his goal was to find the culprit?*

It is possible to divide yes-no questions into *positive* and *negative* according to their structure. It means that positive yes-no questions do not include any item in negative form, such as *not* added to the operator or expressions like *never*, while negative yes-no questions include it. (Quirk et al. 1985, 808)

[35] *Do they have new stuff there as well?* (BNC)

[36] *Don't you remember?*

[37] *Have you never seen him?*

### 3.2.2 Wh-questions

Wh-question represents an open form of interrogative. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 873) It incorporates a wh-word whose function is to ask about the unknown to obtain clarification in the following answer. Remaining parts of a clause are considered to be familiar to speaker. (Bieber et al. 1999, 204) Concerning wh-words, it is possible to use *what*, *who/whom/whose*, *which*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* as well. Expression *how* belongs to wh-words on the basis of its meaning. (Quirk et al. 1985, 817; Santorini and Kroch 2007) Wh-words may represent individual sentence members, such as subject and object, or they may comprise a phrase with other expressions (e.g. *how old*, *which house*). (Bieber et al. 1999, 204)

The phrase including a wh-word is situated at the beginning of the question. Within this phrase, the wh-word is located predominantly in initial position. However, there are cases where it is not true. If the wh-word is part of a prepositional complement, it follows the preposition which happens within formal style. (Quirk et al. 1985, 817)

[38] *On which topic did you focus?*

In case that the wh-word or phrase containing wh-word does not represent subject of the question, there is subject-auxiliary inversion. Therefore, initial wh-element is followed by the operator which precedes the subject. If verb phrase of the question does not contain any operator, *do* is used. (Quirk et al. 1985, 818)

[39] *How are things going?* (COCA)

[40] *How did police capture Laurean?* (COCA)

In terms of position of the wh-element, which does not represent subject, sometimes it may stay *in situ* which means that it is placed in such position where it would be in clause which is not interrogative. Thus it would be preceded by verb phrase. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 873)

[41] *The cancer was where?* (COCA)

It is also possible to create wh-question using infinitivals. Such wh-question does not contain subject. There are two types of such wh-questions, these which incorporate *to* and these which do not incorporate *to*. Wh-questions using infinitivals, which incorporate *to*, often occur as titles of articles, books, etc. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 873-874)

[42] *How to get dressed fast*

[43] *How to do it?*

[44] *Why be angry?*

Other special case of wh-questions is a *multiple wh-question*, which includes two or more wh-elements, which means that only one of them can be located at the beginning of the clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 204) In case that one of these elements represents subject, this element is always located at the beginning of the clause. However, sometimes two wh-elements can be coordinated, for example, when clause contains two adverbial wh-elements. (Quirk et al. 1985, 823) This kind of wh-question is used in case that speaker needs to specify more than one piece of information. (Bieber et al. 1999, 204)

[45] *Who did what to whom?*

[46] *Where and when was this recorded? (COCA)*

In informal conversation, wh-question may contain an expletive which follows the wh-word. The expletive is used for strengthening the wh-word. Thus, such wh-question has very emotional character. (Bieber et al. 1999, 204)

[47] *What the hell's his name? (BNC)*

[48] *What the devil's wrong with him? (BNC)*

[49] *Where on earth did you come from? (BNC)*

Another option is creation of negative wh-questions. In a negative wh-questions, wh-element is usually followed by an operator, which is common within wh-questions, and operator is followed by *not*. Operator and *not* are then contracted. (Quirk et al. 1985, 820-821)

[50] *Why don't you go home?*

[51] *Who hasn't had any cake?*

### 3.2.3 Alternative questions

This kind of question includes two or more options to be chosen in the answer. Therefore, alternative questions incorporate *or*-coordinator whose function is to connect the options. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 868-869)

It is possible to distinguish two basic types of alternative questions. The first type is similar to yes-no questions, nevertheless the following answer will not include confirmation or refusal. It will include one of the options expressed in the question. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 51) This type of alternative question is different from ordinary yes-no question in its intonation. The example below shows that question containing *or* does not have to be necessarily alternative, which means that intonation is really important to avoid misunderstanding. (Quirk et al. 1985, 823)

[52] A: *Would you like some tea or coffee?*      B: *Coffee, please.*

[53] A: *Would you like some tea or coffee?*      B: *No, just some water.*

This type of alternative question may contain options of opposite polarity where the second option can be shortened by skipping certain parts. According to Huddleston, such questions are called *polar-alternative* questions. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 870)

[54] *Do you like it or do you not like it?*

[55] *Do you like it or don't you like it?*

[56] *Do you like it or don't you?*

[57] *Do you like it or not?*

The second type of alternative questions is similar to wh-question. Actually, it is comprised of two questions where the first one is the wh-question. The second question contains the options and it is often elliptical. (Quirk et al. 1985, 823)

[58] *Which one should I try on? The black one or the red one?*





[65] A: *Show the drawing to John.*

B: *Show the drawing to John?*

In terms of alternative echo question, it contains *or-coordination*. Thus, there are two or more options to be chosen in an answer. One of these options has been expressed in stimulus. So this option is then included in the answer. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 886)

[66] A: *She told it to Fred.*

B: *She told it to Fred or Frank?*

The last type is variable echo question which contains a wh-word replacing some part of stimulus. Such echo question shows, which part of the message recipient misheard, using proper wh-word (e.g. *what* or *how*). In the following answer, wh-word is replaced by corresponding information. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 886; Quirk et al. 1985, 835) In terms of position of the wh-word, it can be sometimes located at the beginning of the wh-echo question with ordinary structure of the whole clause, as it is common in wh-questions, but it has different intonation in this case. (Santorini and Kroch 2007) However, wh-word more frequently stays in situ within echo questions. And as in case of yes-no echo questions, structure of variable echo questions depends on clause type of stimulus. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 888-889)

[67] A: *She works as a manageress.*

B: *She works as what?*

[68] A: *Has Mary seen the doctor?*

B: *Has who seen the doctor?*

[69] A: *Why did she go to the meeting?*

B: *Why did she go where?*

[70] A: *What a shame it is!*

B: *What a shame what is?*

[71] A: *Show the drawing to John.*

B: *Show what to John?*

### 3.2.5 Usage within speech and writing

Generally, questions are supposed to be far more frequent in spoken language. It is due to the fact, that asking questions normally arises from reciprocal communication between two or more people, which means, that questions are most naturally used in conversation. Nevertheless, relatively frequent occurrence can be noted also in fictional literature. Questions can be commonly found there as part of a dialogue. (Bieber et al. 1999, 211) In case that a question appears in writing and it is not part of a dialogue, its function is predominantly rhetorical. (Bieber, Conrad and Leech 2002, 252)

### 3.3 Imperatives

Imperatives are structures used by the speaker to express his requirements in a command form. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 53) Generally, purpose of such structures is influencing the recipient to follow a command and fulfil the requirements of the speaker. (Leech 1991, 191) It means that imperatives are associated with some activity performed in the future. This activity does not have to be a consequence of some strict order. Imperative may also represent a request, advice, instructions, permission, invitation, etc. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 929-931)

There are some general features which are common for imperatives, namely absence of the subject, and occurrence of the verb in its basic form. However, it is not possible to use modal verbs in imperative. As well as indication of tense and aspect is missing. (Bieber et al. 1999, 219) In other respects, arrangement of constituents within imperatives is identical with declaratives. Concerning negation, negative imperatives can be created by placing *don't* in initial position. (Quirk et al. 1985, 827, 830)

[72] *Go away.*

[73] *Don't lie to me!*

In positive imperatives, the verb *do* can be incorporated in order to intensify positive orientation of the sentence. Therefore, it alters the imperative to have more influencing effect on recipient. (Quirk et al. 1985, 833)

[74] *Do remember that the public may not have your abiding interest in environmental health.* (BNC)

Imperatives may have form of passive which means that verb phrase of imperative contains a verb, in this case *be* or *get*, in its basic form which is followed by another verb in form of past participle. Passive imperatives can be both positive and negative, however, in case of the verb *be*, positive form is not so frequent. (Quirk et al. 1985, 827)

[75] *Don't be taken in by his welcome grin.* (BNC)

[76] *Get washed and get dressed.* (BNC)

### 3.3.1 Imperatives with *let*

There is a significant kind of imperatives containing the verb *let*. Such imperatives are thus comprised of the *let*, which is followed by the subject which occurs in accusative here. (Quirk et al. 1985, 829) At first, it is possible to understand such kind of imperative as ordinary which means that speaker makes a request for permission. However, imperative with *let* may stand for special kind of imperatives including *let's* (contraction of *let us*) which express first person plural. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 924-925) According to Huddleston, there is one more special kind of imperative with *let*, called *open let-imperatives*. Within this kind of imperatives, the verb *let* is frequently followed by third person in accusative. Purpose of open let-imperative is not a request for permission. In this case, the verb *let* can be perceived as *should*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 925, 936)

[77] *Let me go through it again, I, I did rush through it.* (BNC)

[78] *Let's think about people like ourselves and the kind of work we do.* (BNC)

[79] *Let it be agreed that the doctrine is anomalous.* (BNC)

Negative imperatives with *let* can be created using *not* which follows *let* and the subject. Other option is substitution of the subject by some other negative expression, such as *no-one*. It is also possible to use *don't* that is typical for informal English. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 54)

[80] *Let's not all shout.* (BNC)

[81] *Let no-one blame me.* (BNC)

[82] *Don't let her take any great amount of it.* (BNC)

### 3.3.2 Imperatives with obvious subject

As mentioned, imperatives generally do not contain obvious subject. Nevertheless, it is possible to integrate it into this structure. In case of imperatives, pronoun *you* or noun phrase in third person can be used to represent subject. Regarding subject *you*, it may give the impression of annoyance or aggression. But it depends on a voice tone, content and context of the utterance. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 925-926)

[83] *You be nice.*

In terms of negation of such imperatives, *don't* can be placed in initial position, or it can follow the subject. And, as in case of imperatives with *let*, negative expression, such as *no-one*, can be used. (Quirk et al. 1985, 830)

[84] *Don't you try to threaten me!* (BNC)

[85] *No-one say a word!*

### 3.3.3 Usage within speech and writing

Usage of imperatives can be noticed to be much more typical for spoken language. It results from the fact that when pronouncing a command, it is expected there is somebody else to receive it. That is why imperatives may most often occur in reciprocal communication of two or more people. In case that imperative is used within written form of language, its purpose can be, for instance, giving instructions for some act or helping with orientation in text. (Bieber et al. 1999, 221-222)

## 3.4 Exclamations

Exclamations are structures which are used to show how the speaker feels about some matter. It happens with strengthened participation of emotions. Exclamations can be realized via various kinds of constructions which may have form of complete clause, a phrase, or even one word only. (Bieber et al. 1999, 219; Leech 1991, 139-141)

In terms of structure, the simplest exclamations are represented by interjections (or emotion words), such as *ah* or *oh*. Other simple exclamations may comprise an adjective only or some expletive. (Leech 1991, 140-141)

[86] *Fantastic!*

[87] *My God!*

Regarding more complex structures, exclamations commonly incorporate a *wh*-element which is located at the beginning of a clause. This feature is characteristic also for *wh*-questions. But in case of exclamations, it is possible to use *wh*-words *what* and *how* only. In addition, exclamations do not usually require inversion of subject and operator. (Quirk et al. 1985, 833) However, there are cases where the inversion occurs but it happens very rarely. This phenomenon is related to literary language. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 920)

[88] *How beautiful she looks!*

[89] *How rarely does one see such a chivalry nowadays!* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 920)

Concerning wh-words used in exclamations, there are several possible combinations with other constituents of a clause to create wh-element. Wh-word *what* can be found as part of a noun phrase. The second possible wh-word *how* can be used to reinforce an adjective, an adverb, or a whole clause. (Quirk et al. 1985, 834)

[90] *What a wonderful thing education is!* (BNC)

[91] *How suspenseful the movie was!*

[92] *How loudly he speaks!*

[93] *How she used to love pizza!*

It is possible to create exclamation, containing wh-element, without a verb. Such exclamations have mostly the form of a noun phrase, or an adjectival phrase. These phrases may be followed by some other structures, for example, declarative content clause or infinitival. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 921)

[94] *What a nice car!*

[95] *How wonderful!*

[96] *What a shame that he forgot her birthday!*

[97] *What a terrible thing to say!*

Apart from wh-elements, it is possible to use *so* and *such* which have similar role in a clause. A phrase, which includes one of these words, does not have to be located at the beginning of a clause because these words do not represent exclamative words. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 923)

[98] *So much remains to be done!* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 923)

[99] *It is such a good machine that!* (BNC)

Other possible option for creating the exclamations are *extrapositionable noun phrases* according to Huddleston. Such exclamation begins with the article *the* followed by a noun, to which a relative clause or a phrase beginning with *of* is attached. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 924)

[100] *The tone he spoke with her!*

[101] *The cost of these clothes!* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 924)

Exclamations may have form of various types of clauses. The examples below show the exclamations with exactly the same structure as in interrogative clauses and declarative clauses. (Bieber et al. 1999, 219)

[102] *Isn't that beautiful!*

[103] *She's a singer!*

### 3.4.1 Usage within speech and writing

Exclamation structures can be found particularly within spoken form of language. It is due to the fact that they are used to express personal approach of speaker. (Bieber, Conrad and Leech 2002, 433) Especially elliptic exclamations, which does not include verb and subject pronoun, are supposed to be frequent. Furthermore, exclamations may quite often incorporate expletives which are typical for speech as well. (Bieber et al. 1999, 219, 1102)

### 3.5 Non-finite clauses

In English, it is possible to distinguish two types of forms applied to a verb which are called *finite* and *non-finite*. These terms can be applied to verb phrases as well, where non-finite verb phrase can incorporate only verbs in non-finite form. Thus, non-finite clauses are such clauses which do not contain a verb in finite form. (Leech 1991, 288-290)

Concerning non-finite verbs, they are recognizable from finite verbs on the basis of their inflectional suffix to some extent. Therefore, it is possible to recognize non-finite verbs in form of *past participle* and *gerund-participle*. However, also verbs in their base form can be, in some cases, treated as non-finite verbs. Such non-finite verbs are called *infinitivals* which can be further divided into *to-infinitivals* and *bare infinitivals*. *To-infinitivals* are preceded by *to* and, contrary to *bare infinitivals*, they are frequently used. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1173-1174) Another criterion for indicating non-finite verbs is the fact that

they do not denote tense. In addition, non-finite verbs cannot be represented by modal auxiliaries. (Quirk et al. 1985, 995)

Non-finite constructions can be examined in the same way as finite clauses. It means that it is possible to find there elements with such sentence functions which are identical to those occurring in finites. Therefore, non-finites are treated as clauses. (Quirk et al. 1985, 992) However, they do not often contain subject. Non-finite clauses are ordinarily dependent and, according to form of the verb, they can be divided into three basic types, namely *ed-clauses*, *ing-clauses* and *infinitive clauses*. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 43)

### 3.5.1 Syntactic functions of non-finite clauses

Apart from different forms of a verb, each type of non-finite clauses varies from the point of view of variety of functions which they may perform within the sentence. With regard to this difference, infinitive clauses and *ing-clauses* are more universal. It means that both may occur in wider range of functions contrary to *ed-clauses*. (Bieber et al. 1999, 198)

Generally, non-finite clauses can represent either complements or modifiers, alternatively supplements. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1176) Concerning infinitives and *ing-clauses*, they may serve as extraposed subject, subject complement, direct object or adverbial, for instance, and they may be part of a noun phrase or an adjectival phrase. Furthermore, both can be found in position of subject as well. In contrast, *ed-clauses* are much more limited as mentioned. They can represent only direct object, adverbial or they can be part of a noun phrase. (Bieber et al. 1999, 198-200) The examples below show non-finite clauses in function of subject and direct object.

[104] *To deny that hunting is innate for humans is just perverse.* (COCA)

[105] *Having children is a life choice that is down to the individual.* (BNC)

[106] *I want to stay with you.* (BNC)

[107] *I like watching rugby league.* (BNC)

[108] *I want a job done and I want it done properly.* (BNC)

### 3.5.2 Usage within speech and writing

It is assumed that non-finite clauses are more commonly used in written language whether they function as modifiers or complements. (Bieber et al. 1999, 606, 754) A reason, why non-finites more commonly occur in writing, can be the fact that they can be used as a device for making a sentence more compact. (Quirk et al. 1985, 995) There is probably the



only exception in case of *to*-infinitivals as post-modifiers, which are more frequently used in speech. (Bieber et al. 1999, 607)

[109] *You've always got something to say.* (BNC)

### 3.6 Passives

Significant distinction between active and passive voice is based on relation between semantic roles and sentence functions in a clause which means that their combination is different within active clause and different within passive clause. The distinction is shown in the example below. Subject of the active clause is *John*, whereas subject of the passive clause is *Jane*. In terms of semantic roles, subject *John* is agent because it functions as an active performer in the clause. In contrast, subject *Jane* is patient because its role is passive in the clause. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1427)

[110] *John greeted Jane.* → *Jane was greeted by John.*

It is possible to notice that transformation of active clause into passive clause thus requires new ordering of two constituents of a clause. (Quirk et al. 1985, 159) It means that subject of an active clause is transformed into adjunct following the preposition *by* within a passive clause. This constituent represents agent in both clauses. Within passive clause, the agent is emphasized, i.e. put into position of the new information, or it may be omitted. At the same time, object of the active clause is transformed into subject of the passive clause and this constituent represents patient in both clauses. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1428; Veselovská 2009, 26-27)

Another significant distinction of an active and passive clause is connected with a verb phrase. Within passive clause, the most common form of the verb phrase is composed of auxiliary *be* in appropriate form and main verb in form of past participle. (Quirk et al. 1985, 159) Regarding the main verb, passive clause is ordinarily possible to be created with *transitive verbs*. Transitive verb is the verb which needs an object within a clause. The object is crucial for creation of passive clause because, as mentioned, it can be transformed into the subject. (Leech 1991, 332)

### 3.6.1 Passives with *get*

Sometimes, passives can be created using the verb *get* instead of auxiliary *be*. Such passives are not that common as *be*-passives. It is associated with using solely dynamic verbs, i.e. verbs that demonstrate some action. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1442)

In some cases, subject of the passive clause may be perceived to have rather agentive role which means that the subject somehow contributed to situation which occurred. In such cases, passive with *get* is more likely chosen to be used than *be*-passive because it promotes the agentive perception of the subject. In addition, use of passive with *get* is most often associated with situations which have either profitable or unfavourable impact on the subject. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1442)

[111] *I got elected because the primary teacher/pupil ratio was the worst in the country.*  
(BNC)

[112] *Then I got arrested for some petty thing, shoplifting.* (BNC)

### 3.6.2 Usage within speech and writing

As stated, agent can be omitted in a passive clause which is more frequent than its preserving within the clause. This phenomenon denotes that passives are more commonly used in written language than in spoken one. The most frequent use can be noted within academic texts because, in fact, there is certain tendency to be more general and omission of agent facilitates making generalizations. Reason for the omission can be, for instance, the fact that the agent is unknown or it is unnecessary to mention him which means that the agent represents only low-level information. (Bieber et al. 1999, 938, 943) In contrast, usage of passives with *get* inclines to be evaded within formal English. It indicates that this kind of passive may be more frequently used in spoken language. (Quirk et al. 1985, 161)

## 3.7 Changing word order

### 3.7.1 Cleft sentences

Cleft sentence is type of structure used to accentuate certain part of a sentence. So speaker can choose a constituent which he wants to emphasize. (Quirk et al. 1985, 89) *Clefting* is based on division of clause into two parts. Thus, message, which can be conveyed in one clause, is expressed in two clauses instead. Both clauses contain their own verb. (Bieber et al. 1999, 958) Cleft sentences can be divided into two types according to its structure and

location of highlighted constituent in the sentence. These two types are called *it-clefts* and *wh-clefts*. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 134)

### 3.7.1.1 *It-clefts*

Regarding *it-clefts*, highlighted element is located in the first part of the sentence. The first part of the sentence is composed of the pronoun *it* followed by the verb *be* in appropriate form. The verb *be* may entail an adverb (e.g. *only*) or the negator *not*. Then the highlighted element follows. In position of highlighted element, a noun phrase, an adverb phrase, a prepositional phrase or an adverbial clause may occur. In terms of second part of the sentence, it is similar to a relative clause and it may begin with *that*, for example. (Bieber et al. 1999, 959; Quirk et al. 1985, 89) It is supposed that the recipient is familiar with this part of an *it-cleft* so it is less prominent. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 134)

[113] *No, it's only wine that I want.* (BNC)

[114] *It was for this reason that Swangrove came about.* (BNC)

[115] *It was here that my middle daughter, Nephthys, found Nefi.* (BNC)

[116] *It was because they were frightened, he though, that they had grown so small.*  
(Bieber et al. 1999, 959)

### 3.7.1.2 *Wh-clefts*

This type of cleft sentences can be called also *pseudo-cleft sentences*. Within pseudo-clefts, highlighted element is located in the second part of the sentence. First clause of pseudo-cleft sentence begins with a *wh*-word which is frequently *what*. Concerning second part of pseudo-cleft sentence, it begins with the verb *be* in appropriate form and then element, which is located there to be emphasized, follows. The highlighted element may be a noun phrase, an infinitive clause or a finite nominal clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 959; Rafajlovičová 2005, 135) As in case of *it-clefts*, emphasis of clause, which does not contain highlighted element, is reduced because of familiarity of the recipient with its content. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 135)

[117] *What they want is everyday talk.* (BNC)

[118] *What we need is to get the best of both worlds.* (BNC)

[119] *What she means is that this instruction should be borne in mind if at any time it starts raining.* (BNC)

### 3.7.1.3 Reversed *wh*-clefts

Except for basic arrangement of pseudo-cleft sentences, it is possible to create *reversed pseudo-clefts*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1420) They are similar to normal pseudo-clefts. However, highlighted element precedes the *wh*-clause in this case. (Bieber et al. 1999, 960)

[120] *Experience is what we learn from our mistakes.* (BNC)

Another option is creation of reversed pseudo-clefts using demonstrative pronoun, most commonly *that*. The pronoun is placed in initial position and is followed by the verb *be* in a proper form which precedes a clause beginning with a *wh*-word. (Bieber et al. 1999, 961)

[121] *That is what has been recommended so far.* (BNC)

### 3.7.1.4 Usage within speech and writing

*It*-clefts can normally occur in various types of registers. Nevertheless, the most common occurrence may be noted within written language. (Bieber et al. 1999, 961)

[122] *It is here that techniques of various kinds are put into action to achieve practical learning outcomes.* (BNC)

*It*-clefts are used within written language due to the fact that they enable to create a link with previous statement. In addition, they may help to express information which is already known. This information is thus expressed in the second part of sentence. (Bieber, Conrad and Leech 2002, 422)

Contrary to *it*-clefts, pseudo-cleft sentences can be found predominantly in spoken language. Reason for such usage may be content of the *wh*-clause which commonly contains only low-level information. It indicates that the *wh*-clause may serve as a starting point for initiating a statement. (Bieber et al. 1999, 961, 963) Second part of the pseudo-cleft sentence is then used for expressing important information. (Bieber, Conrad and Leech 2002, 422) In terms of reversed pseudo-clefts, they are not very common generally. However, those which incorporate initial demonstrative pronoun are widely used in conversation. (Bieber et al. 1999, 961)

### 3.7.2 Fronting

Fronting deals with placing an element of a clause into front position. It means that the element is then situated at the beginning of the clause and precedes the subject. (Leech 1991, 155)

There are several reasons for usage of fronting. Firstly, fronting can be used as means for emphasizing an element of a clause which means that the clause is rearranged in order to highlight the most significant part. Another purpose of fronting is attaining the cohesion of information. Thus, fronted element refers to something, what has been said previously, and in this way, it creates connection with the previously said information. Last function of fronting may be creation of contrast. (Bieber et al. 1999, 900; Quirk et al. 1985, 1377)

#### 3.7.2.1 *Elements liable to fronting*

Regarding elements liable to fronting, object belongs to them. Object may be represented by a noun phrase or the whole clause. Fronting of the object is usually used for its emphasis or highlighting a contrast. However, regarding fronted demonstrative pronouns, they are frequently placed into front position to show the relation with previously expressed information. Also parallel structures, where each of them contains fronted object, are commonly created and they are used to accentuate the contrast. Other example of fronted object can be a complement clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 900-904)

[123] *This I don't know.* (BNC)

[124] *Some things you forget. Other things you never do.* (Bieber et al. 1999, 900)

[125] *Why it got this name I've no idea.* (BNC)

Adverbials are also liable to fronting. In this case, inversion of subject and verb frequently occurs along with fronting. But if the subject of the clause is represented by a personal pronoun, inversion is not required. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1378-1379)

[126] *Now is the acceptable time.* (BNC)

[127] *In Britain we often listen for a person's accent.* (BNC)

Another element, which is possible to front, is predicative. Its function is usually making cohesion between information. As in case of fronted adverbials, fronting of predicatives can elicit inversion of subject and verb. (Bieber et al. 1999, 902, 904)

[128] *More fundamental were his experiments with hawks, in which he fed them meat contained in small cages.* (BNC)

Furthermore, main verbs along with following constituents in ordinarily arranged clause are liable to fronting. It is possible to front verb in its base form, verb in gerund participle and also verb in past participle. Fronting of a verb in its base form does not require inversion. Fronted verb thus precedes the subject and the following operator. By contrast, fronting of a verb in gerund participle or past participle does require the inversion. Thus, the fronted verb is immediately followed by the operator which precedes the subject. (Bieber et al. 1999, 905-906)

[129] *And pull they did.* (BNC)

[130] *Standing on the sand is a beach hut built like a mini-mosque.* (Bieber et al. 1999, 907)

[131] *Gone was the confident, self-assured woman and in its place an uncertain, frightened child.* (BNC)

However, there are cases where fronting is required and ordinary. For instance, this applies for elements which involve a wh-word. Such elements are part of relative clauses, exclamations, interrogative clauses, etc. (Bieber et al. 1999, 153)

[132] *It's a place where they are safe and well fed.* (BNC)

### 3.7.2.2 *Usage within speech and writing*

In terms of usage, fronting is generally rather uncommon, apart from structures, which are fronted ordinarily (e.g. wh-clauses). However, it is possible to say that fronting more frequently occurs in written language than in speech. The most common purpose of usage fronted structures in writing is developing cohesion between sentences. This is realized mainly using fronted predicatives. (Bieber et al. 1999, 909-910) In addition, it is, for

example, used in journalism to emphasize colourfulness of the language. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1378) In contrast, fronting is not so frequent in speech but it can be used there to highlight certain element of clause (e.g. object). (Bieber et al. 1999, 910)

### 3.7.3 Inversion

Inversion refers to a rearrangement of elements within a clause. It is connected particularly with subject and verb. (Leech 1991, 218) In many cases, inversion is elicited by placing certain element within a clause (except for the subject and the verb phrase) into front position. (Bieber et al. 1999, 911)

Inversion is generally used to fulfil several functions. Firstly, it can serve as device for development of cohesion and contextual suitability. Another function may be strengthening of a message. Finally, inversion can be used for influencing a positioning of focus within a clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 911)

Inversion can be divided into two basic types, namely *subject-verb inversion* and *subject-operator inversion*. The first type concerns inversion of the subject and the whole verb phrase. The other type applies to the subject and the operator only, the operator thus precedes the subject. In case that the verb phrase does not contain any constituent, which can function as an operator, auxiliary *do* is used. (Rafajlovičová 2002, 130)

Concerning the verb *be*, it can be treated as the verb as well as the operator. It indicates that, in this case, there is certain option to choose whether its locating into position preceding subject will be considered to be subject-verb inversion or subject-operator inversion. The choice is based on possibility to substitute the verb *be* either by other operator or by other main verb within particular structure. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1379)

#### 3.7.3.1 Subject-verb inversion

Generally, subject-verb inversion can be found in case that the verb is intransitive. Intransitive verbs, which are liable to inversion, typically express location or movement. Such verbs are, for example, *be*, *go*, *come* and *lie*. Concerning subject, this type of inversion does not occur if subject is represented by a personal pronoun. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 130)

[133] *There goes my brother.*

[134] *That way lies futility and the strangulation of the human spirit.* (BNC)

Clauses, which include subject-verb inversion, frequently begin with an adverbial. The adverbial most commonly denotes place. Therefore, expressions like *here*, *there* and *down* frequently occur in this position. Also more complex adverbials can be found there. Next, inversion can occur with complement in initial position. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1379-1380)

[135] *Here comes the big pigeon, there he is.* (BNC)

[136] *On the meadows were harebells pointing away from the mountain and its winds.*  
(BNC)

[137] *Similarly adventurous is her choice of materials and techniques.* (BNC)

Although subject-verb inversion occurs especially with intransitive verbs, there is possibility to find this type of inversion with transitive verb. It applies for reporting clauses. In this case, direct speech stands for object, which is in initial position within the clause, and precedes the verb, which is followed by the subject. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1380)

[138] *'It's basically a question of budgets', said director Robert T. Buck.* (BNC)

### 3.7.3.2 *Subject-operator inversion*

One of the most frequent structures is represented by wh-questions excluding those beginning with *who* because, as mentioned, inversion follows only elements which does not represent subject. This type of inversion concerns also closed interrogative structures which are generally common. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 95)

[139] *What did they mean by this?* (BNC)

[140] *Do you like this?*

Another example of subject-operator inversion can be exclamative structures, however, uninverted option is more usual in this case. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 95) This type of inversion involves also structures beginning with elements which have negative or limiting character. Such elements are, for instance, *never*, *hardly*, *only*, etc. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 130)

[141] *What a fool have I been!* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 95)



[142] *Never have I known time to pass so slowly!* (BNC)

Another structures, which belong to this type, are structures containing *so* and *such*. Elements including *so* and *such* can be found in initial position. *So* may also elicit inversion in elliptical coordinate structures. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 96; Quirk et al. 1985, 1381) In this case, *so* represents linking expression which refers to the predicate located in the preceding clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 917)

[143] *Such a fuss would he make that we'd all agree.* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 96)

[144] *Benjamin studied some of these and so did I but we could discover nothing amiss.* (BNC)

Subject-operator inversion concerns also those conditional clauses which does not involve conjunction *if*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 96) Such conditional clauses thus begin, for instance, with *had* or *were*. (Bieber et al. 1999, 919)

[145] *Had we been animals we would have hunted co-operatively, bred regularly and protected one another rigorously.* (BNC)

[146] *Were they given this breathing space it would give them a chance to be less edgy about Olwyn.* (BNC)

### 3.7.3.3 Usage within speech and writing

From the point of view of usage, inversion is not very frequent in general (except for inversion occurring in interrogatives). It can be most often found in written language, especially in fictional literature. It is possible to find there particularly subject-verb inversion and it is not only because of the fact that frequent use of reporting clauses may be noticed there. Fictional literature involves also other forms of subject-verb inversion which represent suitable structures for specifying the settings. Concerning subject-operator inversion, it is also connected with written language predominantly. (Bieber et al. 1999, 926) In contrast, inversion is not so frequent in speech, however, relatively frequent use of inverted structures beginning with adverbials like *here* and *there* can be found there. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1380) Further, structures, which begin with the linking *so*, are also quite common within spoken language. (Bieber et al. 1999, 926)

### 3.8 Ellipsis

Ellipsis can be defined as an omission. In terms of language in general, there are more kinds of omission (e.g. phonological omission of particular syllables) and the term *ellipsis* refers to such kind which applies to grammar. (Quirk et al. 1985, 883) Thus, ellipsis means omitting elements within a clause. (Bieber et al. 1999, 156)

Elements of a clause, which are omitted, may be recovered as well. It implies that, concerning ellipsis, *verbatim recoverability* is applied. (Quirk et al. 1985, 884) Therefore, according to this principle, recoverable elements can be retrieved on the basis of certain context. Characteristic feature of ellipsis is thus possibility to add elements, which were lacking in original clause, and at the same time, the meaning of the clause is maintained and also structure of the clause is still grammatically correct. (Bieber et al. 1999, 156)

#### 3.8.1 Classification of ellipsis

Firstly, ellipsis can be divided simply according to its position in a sentence. Therefore, three kinds of ellipsis can be recognized in this case, namely *initial* ellipsis, *medial* ellipsis and *final* ellipsis. (Bieber et al. 1999, 156)

Other classification of ellipsis is based on recoverability of an omitted element. As mentioned, the recoverability is dependent on specific type of context. Thus, ellipsis can be divided into *textual*, *situational* and *structural*. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 65)

Textual ellipsis is particularly connected with linguistic context from which omitted elements can be recovered. On the basis of the location of ellipsis in relation to its antecedent, this kind of ellipsis can be divided into *anaphoric* and *cataphoric*. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 65) If ellipsis is anaphoric, its antecedent comes before and if ellipsis is cataphoric, its antecedent comes after. (Quirk et al. 1985, 894)

[147] *I'll be happy if you are (happy).* (Rafajlovičová 2005, 65)

[148] *Those who want (to watch the film), can watch the film.* (Rafajlovičová 2005, 66)

Concerning anaphoric ellipsis, there are several types of construction which are typical within this type of ellipsis. Anaphoric ellipsis can be, for example, located in coordinate clauses which have certain elements in common with clause that precedes it. (Bieber et al. 1999, 156)

[149] *You've become part of me, and I (have become part), of you.* (Bieber et al. 1999, 156)

Replies to questions or, further, sequences of questions and replies are another example of anaphoric ellipsis. Omitted elements can be recoverable from preceding statements. In this case, not only linguistic context is applied. Also situational context has significant role here. (Bieber et al. 1999, 157, 1099)

[150] A: *Have you got and exam on Monday?*

B: *(I've got) two exams (on Monday).*

A: *What exams (have you got)?*

B: *(I've got) German, reading and French oral, French oral's a doddle.*

(Bieber et al. 1999, 157)

Within situational ellipsis, omission of elements and their recoverability occurs on the basis of situational context and extralinguistic context. (Rafajlovičová 2005, 65) This type of ellipsis is mostly initial. In this case, function words, which are characteristic by low-level value of information, are often omitted. (Bieber et al. 1999, 157, 1104) So situational ellipsis may apply to declarative and interrogative clauses where the subject, subject along with an operator or an operator alone can be omitted. (Quirk et al. 1985, 896-898)

[151] *(It) Doesn't matter.* (Quirk et al. 1985, 897)

[152] *(I'll) See you later.* (Quirk et al. 1985, 898)

[153] *(Are) You hungry?* (Quirk et al. 1985, 899)

In terms of structural ellipsis, recognition of omitted elements is contingent on knowledge of grammar. Words, which are omitted within structural ellipsis, can be, for example, prepositions, conjunction *that*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985, 900)

[154] *I know (that) you're right.*

[155] *Twelve people (were) injured in (a) car accident.* (Rafajlovičová 2005, 65)

### 3.8.2 Usage within speech and writing

In terms of textual ellipsis, it is assumed that omission of elements most frequently occurs within spoken language. This applies mainly for sequences of questions and replies which plentifully occur in conversation between two or more people. Situational ellipsis can be found especially in conversation as well. (Bieber et al. 1999, 156-157) Concerning structural ellipsis, there are many cases which can be found solely in written language. Such cases may be, for instance, titles and headlines (see example 155 above). (Rafaljovičová 2005, 65)

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to compare written and spoken language from the syntactic point of view in order to discover what kinds of structures are more characteristic for written language and what kinds of structures for spoken one.

In the key part of this thesis, I focused on constructions which were assumed to show significant difference in usage within spoken and written variation. Structures, which are in this thesis referred to as marginal, can be mostly found in spoken language. The point is that their purposes are convenient for conversation. This finding confirmed my previous assumption as well as finding about questions and imperatives, which can be also found mainly in speech because of their interactive character. Next structures more characteristic for speech are exclamations of which utterance is accompanied by stronger emotions. On the other hand, non-finites and passives are more likely used in writing (with considerable exception of *get*-passives), because they contribute to its compactness. Finding about usage of cleft sentences was relatively unexpected. My assumption was that these constructions are typical for spoken language, however, in case of *it*-clefts, it is not entirely true. In terms of fronting and inversion, these syntactic phenomena are predominantly connected with written language in order to make the language cohesive, alternatively more attractive. The last phenomenon included in this thesis is ellipsis which is most typically used in conversation.

These findings confirm that spoken and written language considerably differs from the syntactic point of view. To summarize the most obvious syntactic differences of these two forms of language, it is possible to say that intricacy of spoken language is particularly based on common occurrence of various short structures attached to a clause and elliptical structures. If structures with an altered word order appear, they are used especially for highlighting certain element within a clause. In addition, spoken language is characterized by frequent occurrence of structures which facilitate an interaction between people. In contrast to spoken language, written language is complex in the sense that written structures are often condensed. Further, written language is characterized by more common occurrence of clauses with an altered word order. Such clauses play a significant role in a text, which is especially creation of connections between sentences.

In conclusion, it is apparent that usage of a language within speech and writing varies from person to person to a certain extent. However, this thesis was aimed to show syntactic differences from the general viewpoint.

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