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**Subject-Verb Agreement after ‘Neither of’, ‘Either of’ and
‘None of’: A Corpus-Based Study**

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla plný seznam citované a použité literatury.

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Poděkování

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with the determinatives ‘either of’, ‘neither of’ and ‘none of’ and with their subject-verb agreement in British English. The subject-verb agreement in this case might be quite problematic for non-native speakers, as there are no clearly stated rules for their usage.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part, methodology and a practical part. In the theoretical part, I firstly deal with the part of speech of the above mentioned expressions and with different points of view provided by various linguists. It is important to state that according to most of the linguists, the syntactic behaviour of ‘neither of’ and ‘either of’ is different from the syntactic behaviour of ‘none of’. These theories are based on different behaviour of ‘either’ and ‘neither’ and ‘none’ on the contrary. For example Huddleston et al. (2002, 387) suggest that ‘neither’ and ‘either’ are both the ‘disjunctive determinatives’ whereas ‘none’ is the ‘negative determinative’. In the second part, I take the matter of subject-verb agreement into consideration. I concentrate on general rules and on some restrictions on the rules which are further treated in the methodology and in the practical part. Furthermore, types of agreements are mentioned, such as ‘grammatical concord’, ‘notional concord’ and the rule of ‘proximity’ (Quirk et al., 1997, 757). This subdivision is described in Wechsler and Zlatić as well, and thus they introduce the terms ‘grammatical agreement’ and ‘pragmatic agreement’ (2000, 802).

In the methodology, I focus on the methods I use while finding and sorting the data in the British National Corpus (BNC). Some of the difficulties that occurred are discussed and the manual sorting is described.

In the practical part, the data from BNC are analysed. Firstly, I concentrate on the frequency of either singular or plural verbs after ‘either of’, ‘neither of’ and ‘none of’. Separately, I distinguish between the cases when these determinatives are followed by pronouns and then by verbs or by nouns and then by verbs to see whether there are some differences. I proceed from the hypothesis provided by Quirk et al. (1997, 764) that after “neither of” and “either of” singular verbs are preferred, whereas after ‘none of’ there is a tendency to use plural verbs. They add that after ‘neither of’ and ‘either of’ plural might be used as well, but mostly in rather informal language (ibid). Similarly, also Huddleston et al. (2002, 507) suggest that “in the fused determiner-head construction, the default verb-form is singular; plurals are also found, but they are likely

to be avoided in formal style". Nevertheless, neither Quirk et al. nor Huddleston et al. provide any definition of formal or informal language. For that reason, at first I distinguish between the written or the spoken language and then I categorise the results according to the 'genres' based on BNC. The prior aim of this thesis is to either confirm or disprove the hypothesis provided by Quirk et al. (1997, 764) that after 'neither of' and 'either of' there is a tendency to use rather singular verbs and after 'none of' plural verbs. Additionally, I attempt to find out whether there are some differences between the spoken or the written language. Lately, I differentiate between the genres and compare their occurrence. If possible, with the help of different genres, I try either to prove or to contradict the hypothesis found in Quirk et al. (1997, 764) and Huddleston et al. (2002, 507) who claim that after 'neither of' and 'either of' plural verbs occur in a rather informal language.

1. CATEGORISATION

1.1 Difference between ‘neither of’, ‘either of’, ‘none of’ and ‘neither’, ‘either’, ‘none’

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between the expressions ‘neither of’, ‘either of’, ‘none of’ and between ‘neither’, ‘either’ and ‘none’ on the contrary. Huddleston et al. (2002, 387) claim that ‘neither’ and ‘either’ are the ‘disjunctive determinatives’ whereas ‘none’ is the ‘negative determinative’. As far as ‘either’ is concerned, they state that it “presupposes a selection from a set of two that is assumed to be identifiable by the addressee” (ibid). They suggest that *either teacher* is equivalent to *either of the teachers*. Similarly, also ‘neither’ functions as a ‘disjunctive determinative’ and stands for the lexicalisation of ‘not’ and ‘either’. Both of these determinatives are always connected with the set of two and “take only singular heads” (ibid). It is therefore correct to use the phrase *either parent*, but not *either children* or *either information* (ibid). On the other hand, there is a ‘negative determinative’ ‘none’ that is connected with the set of two or more. They propose that ‘none’ is the independent form of ‘no’ (2002, 390) which “can combine with plural or singular heads” (2002, 507). This means it is possible to say both *no boy* and *no boys*. Nevertheless, what matters in this study is the subject-verb agreement. Since the determinatives ‘neither’, ‘either’ and ‘none’ are not the heads of the noun phrases, they do not have any influence on the agreement as shown in Biber et al. (1999, 276) in (1). In this sentence, the head of the noun phrase is ‘method’ which is in singular (as always after ‘neither’ and ‘either’). For that reason, also the verb must be in singular and plural is not possible.

(1) *Neither method is entirely satisfactory.*

As mentioned above, Huddleston et al. (2002, 507) claim that “‘either’ and ‘neither’ as pure determiners take only singular heads. On the contrary, in the fused determiner-head construction the default verb-form is singular; plurals are also found.” To demonstrate the fused determiner-head, (2) is provided:

(2) (a) *Has/Have either of the candidates arrived yet?*

(b) *He made two mistakes but **neither of them was/were** very serious.*

Thus it can be stated that after ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ verbs in both plural or singular can be used, i.e. even if the head of the noun phrase is always in plural, the verb can still be used in singular. This phenomenon is demonstrated in (3) and (4). In both of these cases, the heads ‘possibilities’ and ‘conditions’ are in plural. Nevertheless, in (3) the verb is used in singular, whereas in (4) in plural.

- (3) ***Neither of these possibilities agrees** with what we observe.*
[BNC:H78:W_non_ac_nat_science]
- (4) *As things turned out **neither of these two conditions were** met.*
[BNC:BMP:W_ac_soc_science]

1.2 Categorisation in general

In the previous chapter, it is mentioned that ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ are according to Huddleston et al. (2002, 378) ‘determinatives’. However, the terminology differs in various grammar books. In this chapter, the different views about this issue are provided.

Quirk et al. (1997, 376) claim that ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ are the ‘indefinite pronouns’ which “lack the element of definiteness which is found in the personal, reflexive, possessive and demonstrative pronouns, and to some extent also in the *wh*-pronouns”. They state that they are in a “logical sense quantitative” (ibid), and explain further that “they have universal or partitive meaning, and correspond closely to determiners of the same or of similar form.”(ibid)

Likewise Quirk et al. also Biber et al. (1999, 351) mention the category of the indefinite pronouns. It is asserted that they “refer to entities which the speaker/writer cannot or does not want to specify more exactly. Most of these pronouns were originally noun phrases consisting of a quantifier and a noun with a general meaning.” However, this classification comprises only the pronoun ‘none of’ as an indefinite pronoun. The two remaining, i.e. ‘neither of’ and ‘either of’ fall into the category of ‘quantifiers’ (1999, 276). As the reason for this Biber et al. introduce that (1999, 275) “some determiners specify nouns in terms of quality and are therefore called ‘quantifiers’”.

Eastwood (1994, 233) does not comprise the group of indefinite pronouns at all. He distinguishes among personal, reflexive and emphatic and possessive pronouns. The

words ‘neither’ and ‘none’ are classified as ‘negative statements’. As far as ‘either’ is concerned, it is placed to quantifiers. ‘Neither’ can be seen as quantifiers as well (1994, 224).

Another point of view provide Leech et al. (1994, 359) proposing that all the expressions are ‘quantifiers’ in the field of pronouns when stated that “quantifiers are words which denote quantity or amount” (ibid). They state that quantifiers “have determiner function and pronoun function (alone or with an of-phrase)” (1994, 360).

Having collected all the data, it can be concluded that the terminology and subsumption of these expressions is not united. What some linguists call ‘determiners’ might for others be ‘quantifiers’ or ‘pronouns’. In this thesis, I work with the assumption that is based on Huddleston et al., i.e. that all the expressions ‘either of’, ‘neither of’ and ‘none of’ are ‘determinatives’.

1.3 Compound pronouns

In this chapter, I would like to focus on a theory provided by Quirk et al. (1997, 376) who claim that ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ are ‘indefinite pronouns’. According to them the indefinite pronouns are further divided into two main categories which are based on “their morphology and their syntactic behaviour” (ibid). The first category is called the ‘compound pronouns’. Compound pronouns consist of two morphemes, i.e. from a ‘determiner morpheme’, such as ‘every-’, ‘some-’, ‘any-’ or ‘no-’, and from a ‘nominal morpheme’ ‘-one’, ‘-body’ or ‘- thing’. The second category are so called ‘of-pronouns’ as a partitive of-phrase might follow them (ibid).

Four different groups of compound pronouns are distinguished, namely ‘universal’, ‘assertive’, ‘non-assertive’ and ‘negative’ (Quirk et al. 1997, 376). In terms of this subdivision, ‘either’ is a ‘non-assertive determiner’ whereas ‘none’ and ‘neither’ are classified as the ‘negative pronouns and determiners’. (Quirk et al. 1997, 377)

1.3.1 Of-pronouns

All the pronouns ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ fall into the category of ‘of-pronouns’. Apart from the above mentioned pronouns, also pronouns ‘all’, ‘each’, ‘both’, ‘some’, ‘many’, ‘much’, ‘more’, ‘most’, ‘a few’, ‘a little’, ‘less’, ‘least’, ‘one’ and ‘any’ belong to this category (Quirk et al. 1997, 380).

As to the subject-verb agreement by ‘some’, ‘any’, ‘half’ and ‘all’, Quirk et al. (1997, 364) state that with “plural count nouns”, the verb is used in a plural. As an

example, they provide (5). Thus it can be claimed that ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ differ from the rest of the ‘of-pronouns’ since the subject-verb agreement varies.

(5) *Some/hardly any/all/half of the books have been placed on the shelves.*

The of-pronouns share three characteristics. Firstly the indefinite pronouns “can be followed by a partitive of-phrase” (Quirk et al. 1997, 380) as shown in (6)

(6) *Some of us were tired and hungry.*

Secondly they state that the of-pronouns “can be used as substitutes for noun phrases or other nominal constructions” (ibid). As an example Quirk et al. provide:

(7) *Many children learn to read quite quickly, but some (=some children) need special instruction.*

In sentence (7) it is obvious that the noun *children* does not have to be repeated, the meaning of the whole sentence is still preserved.

The third criteria is that “they are all (with the exception of ‘none’) identical in form to the corresponding determiner” (ibid).

2. SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

At the beginning, this chapter deals with the issue of subject-verb agreement, then with its general rules, followed by restrictions on these rules, last but not least it focuses on types of agreement and finally on the indefinite expressions as subject.

As far as the definition of subject-verb agreement is concerned, Quirk et al (1997, 755) provide:

‘Concord’ (also termed ‘agreement’) can be defined as the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature (eg plurality) that accords with a displayed (or semantically implicit) feature in the other.

Additionally, Bock et al. (2006, 66) suggest that there are two basic approaches concerning agreement in grammatical theory. At first, there are the “constraint-based approaches, such as a head-driven phrase structure grammar” (ibid). This theory is represented for example by Wechsler and Zlatić (ibid). Secondly, also “derivational approaches, such as minimalism” occur such as by Chomsky (ibid). When speaking about constraint-based approaches, they further explain that:

“Agreement features can have nonlinguistic, cognitive sources which determine the outcome of agreement. Importantly, referential indices provide values for number or gender features, so that whether a phrase is treated as singular or plural is a matter of whether the referent of the phrase is a singleton or an aggregate.” (ibid)

On the contrary, there are agreement features in derivational accounts. These features are “formal features represented in and manipulated by the syntax or phonology” (ibid).

2.1 *General rules*

According to Quirk et al. (1997, 755) the commonly observed rule tends to be simple, thus a “singular subject requires a singular verb” (ibid) as shown in (8). The subject in

this sentence is *my daughter*, which is in singular. Therefore the predicate *watches* has to be in singular as well.

(8) ***My daughter watches television after supper.***

Equally, “a plural subject requires a plural verb” (ibid). Concerning this statement, they provide (9). On the contrary to (8), in this case, the subject *my daughters* is used in a plural, thereby the predicate *watch* has to be in plural too.

(9) ***My daughters watch television after supper.***

In case that the subject is the whole noun phrase (NP), as is the matter in this study, it is the head of the noun phrase that plays a deciding role. If the head is singular, then the entire phrase is supposed to be singular (Quirk 1997, 755) and vice versa as demonstrated in (10):

(10) (a) ***The change in male attitudes is most obvious in industry.***
(b) ***The changes in male attitude are most obvious in industry.***

In this research, the head of the noun phrase is always in plural. Nevertheless, both of the options, i.e. both singular and plural verbs are possible.

Taking the whole noun phrase as a subject into consideration, Huddleston et al. (2002, 499) agree with Quirk et al. and call this phenomenon a ‘simple agreement’. It is explained that “in simple agreement, the verb agrees with a subject with the form of NP whose person-number classification derives from its head noun” (ibid).

Huddleston et al. (2002, 499) use the terms ‘source’ for subject and ‘target’ for the verb. They suggest that the concord is restricted to clauses in which the verb is either “a present tense form of a verb other than the modal auxiliary” or “a preterite form of the verb ‘be’” (ibid). It is claimed that the concord includes both number and person, thus we can deduce from the sentences in (11) that the verb form “*wants* is a 3rd person singular present tense form while *want* is the plain present tense form, occurring with any other kind of subject – 3rd person plural or else 1st person singular or plural” (ibid).

- (11) (a) *The nurse wants to see him.*
(b) *The nurses want to see him.*

Similarly to Huddleston et al. (2002), also Wechsler and Zlatić (2000, 801) use the terminology of ‘agreement target’ which typically stands for a verb or adjective. Nonetheless, they differ in the terminology stated for the noun (or a subject). What Huddleston et al. (2002) call the ‘source’, Wechsler and Zlatić use the term ‘agreement trigger’ (or ‘controller’). No matter what terms are used, it is important to state that “agreement results from the fact that the information coming from two sources must be compatible” (Wechsler and Zlatić 2000, 801).

2.2 Restrictions on the rules

The general rules mentioned in the previous chapter are not applicable in each case. Its usage happens to be “restricted in several general aspects” (Quirk et al. 1997, 756). Firstly, apart from the verb ‘to be’ the distinction of number is visible only in the 3rd person singular present, thus the agreement in the past is not apparent (ibid). This phenomenon is shown in (12)

- (12) (a) *My daughter watched television after supper.*
(b) *My daughters watched television after supper.*

Secondly, the agreement is shown only in the indicative. There is no distinction by non-finite verbs, imperatives or subjunctives. (ibid)

Thirdly, by modal auxiliaries there is no concord displayed. For this kind of example, they provide:

- (13) (a) *My daughter may watch television after supper.*
(b) *My daughters may watch television after supper.*

Similarly, Biber et al. (1999, 180) state that apart from the verb ‘to be’ subject-verb agreement is restricted to the present tense. It is explained that “the basic grammatical rule is that the *s*-form of lexical verbs and the primary auxiliaries is used with a third person singular subject in the present tense indicative” (ibid). The theories introduced in Quirk et al. (1997) are confirmed as they claim “there is no subject-verb

concord with the modal auxiliaries, verb forms in non-finite clauses and subjunctive forms” (ibid). With regards to subjunctive forms, the example (14) is provided:

(14) *My head felt as if it were split open.*

Another restriction can be “found with singular collected nouns and with the number-transparent quantificational noun construction” (Huddleston et al. 2002, 501). If the singular collected noun is a head of subject noun phrase, both simple agreement and plural override is possible as demonstrated in (15):

(15) (a) *The committee has not yet come to a decision.*

(b) *The committee have not yet come to a decision.*

Nonetheless, when speaking about collectives, the override is applicable only if the head of the subject is a singular noun. In case there is a plural head, it requires a plural verb in agreement with the simple concord rule mentioned above (Huddleston et al. 2002, 502). The “number-transparent construction has overrides of both types”, thus in (16) there is a singular head but a plural verb whereas in (17) there is a plural head but a singular verb.

(16) *A number of spots have/*has appeared.*

(17) *Heaps of money *has/have been spent.*

Bock et al. concentrate on the agreement of “collective-headed subject noun phrases” (2006, 64) as well. They compare this issue in British and American English and claim that for example BBC News Styleguide states that “it is the policy of BBC Radio News that collective nouns should be plural” (ibid).

2.3 Grammatical concord, notional concord and proximity

In this chapter, an overview of ‘grammatical concord’, ‘notional concord’ and ‘proximity’ is provided. Quirk et al. (1997, 757) define that ‘grammatical concord’ is “the rule that the verb matches its subject in number”. However, some difficulties connected with the concord might occur, and thus because of a conflict of the

grammatical concord and the principle of ‘notional concord’ and the principle of ‘proximity’ (ibid).

As for the ‘notional concord’, it is “agreement of verb with subject according to the notion of number rather than with the actual presence of the grammatical marker for that notion” (ibid). To illustrate this, Quirk et al. (1997, 757) provide:

(18) *The government **have** broken all **their** promises.*

The example (18) should show that in British English, collective nouns are often viewed as notionally plural. Moreover, in this example the plural notion is strengthened by the possessive pronoun ‘their’ (ibid).

‘Proximity’, also called ‘attraction’, “denotes agreement of the verb with a closely preceding noun phrase in preference to agreement with the head of the noun phrase that functions as subject” (ibid). As an example, they provide (19). Because the head of the whole noun phrase is singular, the subject of the whole sentence is seen as grammatically singular. However, a plural noun ‘supporters’ precede immediately the verb. For this reason, it causes the plural form of the verb ‘agree’.

(19) *No **one** except his own supporters **agree** with him.*

Additionally, Quirk et al. state that the proximity concord is more commonly applicable in unplanned utterances. On the other hand, in a written language it would be often corrected to grammatical concord (ibid). For that reason, in the practical part, I distinguish between spoken and written language and attempt to find out whether there are some differences.

Similarly, also Wechsler and Zlatic (2000, 802) suggest that the processes of agreement might be divided into two categories, i.e. ‘grammatical agreement’ and ‘pragmatic agreement’. To differentiate these two categories, it is explained that “grammatical agreement results from structural properties of the grammar while pragmatic agreement results from structural properties of the world as described in an utterance. Grammatical agreement is further divided into ‘index agreement’ and ‘concord’” (ibid).

At first, pragmatic agreement vs. grammatical agreement is mentioned. This type of agreement works with the assumption that “coreferential elements must have compatible referential properties” (ibid). This phenomenon is demonstrated in (20)

(20) *A cowboy approached the bar. She ordered a drink.*

The discourse in (20) is undoubtedly grammatical. However, the two noun phrases ‘a cowboy’ and ‘she’ do not agree in respect of the sex of the referent and are thus not co referential (‘cowboy’ must refer to a male while ‘she’ must refer to a female). It can be stated that this discourse is grammatical, but not pragmatic. Contrarily, in case that the grammatical agreement fails as in (21), it leads to ungrammaticality.

(21) **He are happy.*

Secondly, Wechsler and Zlatic (2000, 802) differentiate between pragmatic and index agreement. It is claimed that “index agreement involves sharing of referential indices that are part of the semantic content of a nominal.

In addition Biber et al. (1999, 180) suggest that the agreement patterns are not always clear-cut. Complications with the “form of the subject, meaning of the subject and the distance between the head of the subject noun phrase and the verb phrase” might occur. Also there is plenty “of social and dialectal variation in concord patterns.” (ibid)

2.4 Indefinite expressions as subject

Since this thesis deals mostly with the indefinite pronouns, which Huddleston et al. (2002, 387) call the ‘determinatives’, and their subject verb agreement, also the chapter of indefinite expressions as subject needs to be included. In the field of indefinite pronouns of amount and quantity, the subject-verb number agreement is ambivalent (Quirk et al. 1997, 763). It is associated especially “with the determiners and with the pronouns ‘no’, ‘none’, ‘all’, ‘some’, ‘any’ and fractions such as ‘half’” (ibid). It is evident that with the non-count uses, the verb is singular, as in (22)

(22) *So far no **money has** been spent on repairs.*

Additionally, “with plural count nouns the verb is plural” (ibid):

(23) *No **people** of that name **live** here.*

As far as the pronoun ‘none’ is concerned, in association with countable plural nouns, it is “in divided usage” (Quirk et al. 1997, 764). However, they further state that in constructions with ‘none’, plural is even more preferred (ibid). It is possible to say both of the options in (24)

(24) (a) ***None of the books has** been placed on the shelves.*

(b) ***None of the books have** been placed on the shelves.*

Quirk et al. (1997, 764) add that “prescriptive grammars have tended to insist on the singular verb, but notional concord invites a plural verb, which tends to be more frequently used and is generally accepted even in formal usage.” In addition, it is claimed that “with ‘either’ and ‘neither’ the singular is generally used” (ibid). Nevertheless, it is admitted that “a plural verb sometimes occurs in informal usage when ‘either’ or (particularly) ‘neither’ is followed by a prepositional phrase with a plural complement, both because of notional concord and because of proximity rule” (ibid). This phenomenon is shown in (25):

(25) (a) ***Either of them are** welcome.*

(b) ***Neither of them are** welcome.*

3. METHODOLOGY

The research is established on the data from the British National Corpus (BNC) acquired from Mark Davies' interface. BNC comprises about 100 million words. Among these words, 90 million are samples from the written language and 10 million are samples from the spoken language.

This section deals firstly with the way of working with the corpus search engine, secondly with the corpus data and thirdly with sorting the data. Additionally, it summarizes the criteria used for eliminating irrelevant tokens. It also deals with some difficulties that occurred during the research.

I searched for twelve different queries – for pronouns ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ either followed by personal pronouns ‘them’, ‘you’ and ‘us’ and then by a verb or followed by a noun and then by a verb. Figure 1 shows the query for the pronoun ‘none of’ followed by ‘them’ and then by a verb, which is within a distance of four words on the right side.



The screenshot shows a search interface with the following fields and controls:

- SEARCH STRING** (header)
- WORD(S)**: Input field containing "none of them".
- COLLOCATES**: Input field containing "[v*]", with two dropdown menus on the right showing "0" and "4".
- POS LIST**: Dropdown menu showing "verb.ALL".
- RANDOM**: Button.
- SEARCH**: Button.
- RESET**: Button.

Figure 1. The search query for the pronoun ‘none of’ followed by a personal pronoun ‘them’ and then by a verb.

Analogically, I created 8 further different queries for the pronouns ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ followed by personal pronouns ‘them’, ‘you’ and ‘us’ and then by a verb.

The queries for the pronouns ‘either of’, ‘neither of’ and ‘none of’ followed by nouns had to be added to make the survey complete as demonstrated in Figure 2.



The screenshot shows a search interface with the following fields and controls:

- SEARCH STRING** (header)
- WORD(S)**: Input field containing "none of".
- COLLOCATES**: Input field containing "[nn*]", with two dropdown menus on the right showing "0" and "4".
- POS LIST**: Dropdown menu showing "noun.ALL".
- RANDOM**: Button.
- SEARCH**: Button.
- RESET**: Button.

Figure 2. The search query for the pronoun ‘none of’ followed by a noun.

The number of results is automatically set to one hundred. Therefore, it is necessary to change the settings of the options to a higher number. For that reason I increase the limit to one thousand as shown in Figure 3 so that the highest possible amount of the data is shown.

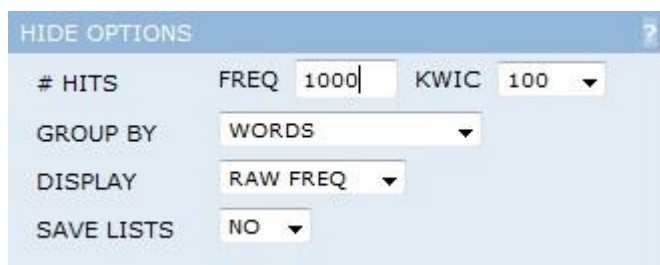


Figure 3. The change of settings of number of tokens.

At first, I make a general survey to establish the number of relevant data. The results are summarised in Table 1 which shows the amount of relevant data also expressed by means of percentage.

	Total number	Relevant tokens followed by pronouns		Relevant tokens followed by nouns	
Either of	711	5,3%	37	5,2%	36
Neither of	877	16,9%	148	12,7%	111
None of	3141	12,2%	382	22,2%	698

Table 1: Relevant data followed either by pronouns or by nouns and then by verbs.

As shown in Table 1, only rather small amount of data is appropriate for this research, which means the manual sorting of the data is necessary. Since apart from the verb 'to be' the distinction of number is visible only in the 3rd person singular present, the agreement in the past is not apparent (Quirk et al., 1997, 756). Secondly, the agreement is shown only in indicative (ibid). Lately, there is no concord displayed by modal auxiliaries (ibid). This all means that the verbs in the past (apart from the preterite form of the verb 'to be'), all the verbs in other persons than 3rd person singular, non-finite verbs, imperatives, subjunctives and modal auxiliaries need to be sorted out from the research.

As an example for the past participle of the verb, that has to be put out from the study, (26) is provided:

- (26) (a) *Together they were even more successful than **either of them had** been alone.* [BNC:2012:FIC_Bk:betrayal]
 (b) *It was the last **either of them spoke** as the Ferrari raced through the night.* [BNC:JY7:W_fict_prose]
 (c) *(...) and a scene was the last thing **either of them needed.*** [BNC:H8J:W_fict_prose]

Also sentences containing modal auxiliaries cannot be taken into consideration. As an example, (27) is shown:

- (27) (a) *Not that he supposed **either of them would** jump at him (...).* [BNC:CKE:fict_prose]
 (b) ***Either of them may** have seen the killer.* [BNC:K1H:W_news_script]
 (c) *Their parents are making dollars faster than **either of them can** count (...).* [BNC:K5D:W_news_other_report]

Secondly, I made the survey of which of the forms of verbs is used more frequently, whether the singular or the plural.

During the search for the data where the pronoun ‘neither of’ is followed by nouns, also some results were found that should fall to the category in which the determinatives are followed by personal pronouns as shown in (28) and (29). The reason for this is that in the query, it is requested that the noun is in a distance of four words on the right side of the pronoun ‘neither of’ and we expect it to be the subject since the subject-verb agreement is what matters in this study. As the corpus is not parsed, but deals only with parts of speech, it is possible that similar results are to be found occasionally. The difference is that the noun that was meant in the query is supposed to be the part of a subject, not the subject complement. In both (28) and (29), the part of the subject is the pronoun ‘us’, not the nouns ‘idiots’ or ‘fighters’. These nouns are the nominal parts of the predicates.

- (28) ***Neither of us are** idiots and Benn must realise that the only way to make the (...).* [BNC:CEP:W_newsp_other_sports]

(29) *It seems it is for hours, but **neither of us are fighters.***
[BNC:CEC:W_fict_prose]

Both of the examples (28) and (29) are then found once more when searching for the results that are followed by pronouns. These examples are not counted twice in each category, but they are reckoned only once in the chapter that deals with the pronouns.

The same problem occurs with the pronoun ‘either of’:

(30) *Not that **either of them were drinkers.*** [BNC:ATE:W_fict_prose]

Similarly to the previous examples, also sentence found in (31) cannot be taken into consideration in this study. In this case, the subject of the sentence is ‘sort of provisions’, and not ‘those cases’. Since I deal with the subject-verb agreement, this sentence is excluded.

(31) *Professor Lock will no doubt correct me if I’m wrong but from memory in **neither of those cases was there the sort of provision in the development plan (...).*** [BNC:KM7:S_pub_debate]

Another rare problem appears, and thus the occurrence of two same sentences as in (32). This double sentence is counted as one in the general results.

(32) *The actor is aided or abetted by one or more other persons and either of the following circumstances exists.*
[BNC:GW1:W_ac_polit_law_edu]

As mentioned in the introduction, Quirk et al. (1997, 764) and Huddleston et al. (2002, 507) suggest that the use of the plural forms of verbs is rather informal. Because the aim of the thesis is either to confirm or to disprove this statement, the source of the data in BNC is analysed. However, there is no definition of ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ language. For that reason, at first, I distinguish between the spoken and written source of the data. Figure 4 shows an example for the spoken language that is represented by letter ‘S’, figure 5 stands for written language which is symbolised by letter ‘W’.

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	BNC:KDA S_conv	you've got to you, you none, none (SP:PS1GF) fucking fifty men (SP:PS1GE) no
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Figure 4. The source of the data is the speech.

2	<input type="checkbox"/>	BNC:FPJ W_ac_soc_science	also significant.' At the ATC adult training centre there's a new comput
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Figure 5. The source of the data is written.

Secondly, I look at the data in more detail and I differentiate between the diverse 'genres' used in BNC. As far as the written language is concerned, there are 6 main genres: 'fiction', 'newspapers', 'academic', 'non-academic', 'magazine' and the last genre is 'miscellaneous'. Among the 'miscellaneous' belong for example 'bibliography', 'religion', 'commerce', 'hansard', 'institutional document', 'letters professional' and 'advertisement'. 'Magazine' is represented by the abbreviation 'poplore'. In the spoken language, BNC provides different genres, for example 'conversation', 'public debate', 'court room', 'lecture', 'consult', 'meeting', 'parliament', 'speech scripted', 'interview', 'broadcast news' and 'demonstration'. In this thesis, all genres found in BNC apart from 'conversation' fall into the category which I call 'others'. The reason for this is that I expect the conversation to be rather spontaneous, thus a little bit more informal. On the contrary, there is the category of "others" that contains mostly prepared speech.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned in the methodology, the determinatives ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’ were firstly searched in BNC with personal pronouns and then with the nouns. Afterwards, the data were sorted according to whether they are followed by a singular or a plural verb, whether they have origin in a spoken or in a written language and finally they were analysed from the point of view of different genres. In this chapter, I attempt to analyse the data and either to confirm or to disprove the hypothesis based on Quirk et al. (1997, 764) who claim that with “‘either’ and ‘neither’ the singular is generally used”. Nonetheless, they add that “a plural verb sometimes occurs in informal usage when ‘either’ or (particularly) ‘neither’ is followed by a prepositional phrase with a plural complement, both because of notional concord and because of proximity rule” (ibid). As far as the pronoun ‘none of’ is concerned, they state that “plural is even more preferred” (ibid). Nevertheless, Quirk et al. do not provide any criteria for distinguishing formal and informal language. For that reason, I come from the different genres.

4.1 ‘Either of’

To start with, I concentrate on the pronoun ‘either of’ which has the smallest amount of results in this research. BNC lists 711 sentences that contain this pronoun, out of which 73 are appropriate for this research. Table 2 shows the relevant data of ‘either of’ followed by nouns or by pronouns and then by singular/plural verbs.

	Nouns		Pronouns		Total amount
	Followed by nouns and a singular verb	Followed by nouns and a plural verb	Followed by pronouns and a singular verb	Followed by pronouns and a plural verb	
Either of	27	8	15	23	73

Table 2. Relevant data of ‘either of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by singular/plural verbs.

4.1.1 ‘Either of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by verbs in a written language

In this chapter, I deal with data in which ‘either of’ is followed by either personal pronouns and then by verbs or by nouns and then by verbs in a written language.

4.1.1.1 ‘Either of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language

At first, I analyse the data in which the pronoun ‘either of’ is followed by personal pronouns ‘us’, ‘you’ and ‘them’ and then by either singular or plural verbs. All the data in this chapter come from a written language. BNC lists 32 relevant sentences as shown in Table 3.

	Written language – total amount	Fiction	Newspapers	Academic	Non-academic	Magazine	Miscellaneous
Singular verbs	15	7	1	2	2	1	2
Plural verbs	17	10	3	0	0	0	4

Table 3. Relevant data of ‘either of’ followed by pronouns and then by singular/plural verbs sorted according to their genres in a written language.

From Table 3, it can be claimed that after ‘either of’ and pronouns, plural verbs are to be found slightly more often, and thus in 17 examples. On the contrary, singular verbs are used in 15 sentences.

Regarding the genres, the one that occurs most frequently together with both singular and plural verbs, is the ‘fiction’. Let me provide (33) as an example containing singular verbs and (34) that stands for plural verbs.

- (33) (a) *I’m not sure whether either of them is relevant.*
[BNC:GWB:W_fict_prose]
- (b) *For all **either of us** knows my business might have doomed.*
[BNC:H97:W_fict_prose]

- (34) (a) *And no, before **either of you start** making theories, I didn't take him into the bedroom (...).* [BNC:GV2:W_fict_prose]
- (b) *It'll mean the Ping Tao won't have to accept what **either of us tell** them to do.* [BNC:G04:W_fict_prose]

There is no much difference concerning the genre of 'fiction' with both plural and singular verbs. However, what differ are the 'academic' and 'non-academic' categories. Whereas with singular verbs, 'academic' and 'non-academic' sources occur in two examples, there is no evidence of these genres by plural verbs. (35) shows an example of the sentence that comes from academic, (36) an example from non-academic genre. (35) might be a bit problematic because at the beginning of this chapter it is stated that 'either of' should be followed by personal pronouns. Nevertheless, in this sentence, there is the relative pronoun 'whom'. Since this sentence cannot be taken out from this research, it is counted to this chapter, even though it does not contain a personal pronoun.

- (35) *The Marriage Act 1949 provides that a marriage between persons **either of whom is** under the age of 16 is void.* [BNC:ABP:ac_polit_law_edu]
- (36) *But for present purposes it really doesn't matter which if **either of them is** the right definition.* [BNC:FBD:W_non_ac_soc_science]

4.1.1.2 'Either of' followed by nouns and then by verbs in a written language

Now I would like to concentrate on the data in which 'either of' is followed by nouns and then by singular or plural verbs in a written language. There are 33 relevant sentences found in BNC as demonstrated in Table 4.

	Written language – total amount	Fiction	Newspapers	Academic	Non-academic	Magazine	Miscellaneous
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Singular verbs	26	1	0	12	7	0	6
Plural verbs	7	1	1	1	1	1	2

Table 4. Relevant data of ‘either of’ followed by nouns and then by singular/plural verbs sorted according to their genres in a written language.

According to Table 4, in the case when ‘either of’ is followed by nouns, there is a tendency to use singular verbs, which are found in 26 examples. On the other hand, plural verbs occur in only 7 sentences.

If we would like to analyse the genres of the data, singular verbs are most commonly found in ‘academic’, and thus in 12 sentences. To demonstrate this, let me provide (37). Contrarily, together with plural verbs, there is no evidence of either ‘academic’ or ‘non-academic’ genre.

- (37) (a) *I do not therefore think **either of these cases** successfully **enables** counsel for the yard to avoid the rule (...).*
[BNC:H81:W_ac_polit_law_edu]
- (b) *If **either of these conditions** is met locally, the search algorithm will have to pursue (...).* [BNC:HX9:W_ac_tech_engin]

From this point of view, it can be claimed that singular verbs are used in rather formal language as the genre ‘academic’ is supposed to be more formal. Plural verbs do not occur in this genre so often.

To sum up these two chapters, it can be concluded that in the chapter in which ‘either of’ is followed by pronouns, plural verbs occur more often than singular verbs. On the contrary, in the section containing ‘either of’ followed by nouns, singular verbs are used more frequently than plural verbs. Considering the genres, in the first chapter, ‘fiction’ appears in most cases. In the second chapter, the most commonly used genre is ‘academic’ and ‘fiction’ is found rather rarely.

4.1.2 ‘Either of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

Having analysed the data from the written language, this chapter deals with ‘either of’ followed by personal pronouns and then by verbs or by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

4.1.2.1 ‘Either of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

At first, I concentrate on the data in which “either of” is followed by personal pronouns.

	Total amount	Conversation	Others
Singular verbs	0	0	0
Plural verbs	6	3	3

Table 5. Relevant data of ‘either of’ followed by pronouns and then by singular/plural verbs sorted in a spoken language.

Table 5 shows that in a spoken language, after ‘either of’ and pronouns, there is no evidence of singular verbs. On the contrary, there are 6 sentences containing plural verbs. As far as their sources are concerned, 3 of them come from ‘conversation’ and three of them have other sources. As an example of conversation, let me provide (38):

- (38) (a) *Do you, **do either of you** know of any really good, good car boot sales?* [BNC:KD1:S_conv]
(b) *I mean I don’t think, you do enough **either of you do** enough (...).*
[BNC:KCE:S_conv]

Similarly, an example of the mix of the genres is demonstrated:

- (39) (a) (...) ***do either of you** have any experience of how long, how long this might take (...).* [BNC:JSC:S_courtroom]
(b) *If **either of you were**, were to die it pays out first of all.*
[BNC:K70:S_speech_unscripted]

4.1.2.2 ‘Either of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

Furthermore, I would like to focus on the data in which ‘either of’ is followed by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language. Since in BNC there are only two sentences to

be found that fall into this category, no table is made. As to the singular or plural verbs, there is one example containing singular verbs and one example including plural verbs. Together with singular verbs, the source is ‘broadcast news’ and the example is demonstrated in (40):

(40) *Are either of the children beginning to, to show the signs of feeling the impact (...)?* [BNC:KRT:S_brdcast_news]

Also an example involving a plural verb is shown, and thus:

(41) *Either of those two approaches are unacceptable in principle in policy terms.* [BNC:JAC:S_pub_debate]

To conclude the area of spoken language of ‘either of’, it is to be stated that it mostly occurs in cases in which ‘either of’ is followed by pronouns. In this case, plural verbs are always used. If followed by nouns, there are fewer examples found in BNC.

4.2 ‘Neither of’

In this chapter I focus on the determinative ‘neither of’. This determinative has the second highest number of the data in this study. BNC lists 877 results, out of which 259 are relevant for this research. Evaluating the number of data for ‘neither of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs, there are 620 results in BNC, out of which 148 are relevant for the research. On the other hand, in case that ‘neither of’ is followed by nouns and then by verbs, BNC lists 257 sentences, out of these 111 are appropriate for the study. Table 6 shows the number of relevant tokens used together with plural or singular verbs if ‘neither of’ is followed by both personal pronouns or by nouns and then by verbs.

	Nouns		Pronouns		Total amount
	Followed by nouns and a singular verb	Followed by nouns and a plural verb	Followed by pronouns and a singular verb	Followed by pronouns and a plural verb	
Neither of	81	30	95	53	259

Table 6. Relevant data of ‘neither of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by singular/plural verbs.

4.2.1 ‘Neither of’ followed by pronouns or nouns and then by verbs in a written language

At first, I go through the data in which the determinative ‘neither of’ is followed either by personal pronouns ‘us’, ‘you’ and ‘them’ and then by verbs, or by nouns and then by verbs.

4.2.1.1 ‘Neither of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language

To begin with, I analyse the data in which ‘neither of’ is followed by personal pronouns and then by verbs in a written language.

	Written language – total amount		Fiction	Newspapers	Academic	Non-academic	Magazine	Miscellaneous
Singular verb	95	72%	55	7	10	8	3	13
Plural verb	37	28%	18	6	1	3	3	6

Table 7. Relevant data concerning the determinative ‘neither of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language.

Having analysed the data in Table 7, it can be stated that after the determinative ‘neither of’ a singular form of a verb is more common as there are 95 tokens with the singular verbs (which is 72%) and 37 with plural verbs (28%).

As far as the singular verbs are concerned, the genre in which it is most frequently used is the ‘fiction’. To demonstrate this let me provide (42):

- (42) (a) *Parthenogenesis, or something, though **neither of us was** exactly virginal.* [BNC:BP8:W_fict_prose]
 (b) *I thought **neither of us was** thrilled, and Robert looked at his watch.*[BNC:G06:W_fict_prose]

Similarly, also plural verbs are most commonly used in the fiction as shown in (43):

- (43) (a) *Neither of them were familiar with the “Barge”.*
[BNC:B3J:W_fict_prose]
(b) *Neither of us were thinking too deeply.* [BNC:JY3:W_fict_prose]
(c) *Are you trying to tell me that **neither of you are** flesh and blood?*
[BNC:A0F:fict_prose]

If we decide to compare both of these options, which means the use of a plural or a singular verb after ‘neither of’ followed by personal pronouns in the field of fiction, it is to be claimed that the results are very similar, and thus almost a half and a half.

The second highest number is found in the genre called ‘miscellaneous’. However, as this genre contains a lot of different subgenres, it is not analysed into a detail.

As to the genre ‘academic’, it occurs in 10 cases together with a singular verb and in only one case by plural verbs. As an example for the academic genre by singular verbs, let me provide (44):

- (44) (a) *But **neither of them** is incapable of pursuing the artificial fiction of being himself.* [BNC:A05:W_ac_humanities_art]
(b) ***Neither of them** seems to have read any work of Latin poetry.*
[BNC:H05:W_ac_humanities_art]

Other genres that are quite frequent are ‘newspapers’ and ‘non-academic’. The least common genre is ‘magazine’.

4.2.1.2 ‘Neither of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a written language

In this section, I work with the data containing ‘neither of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a written language.

	Written Language – total amount	Fiction	Newspapers	Academic	Non-academic	Magazine	Miscellaneous
Singular verb	78	3	3	36	14	2	20
Plural verb	30	3	2	11	4	1	9

Table 8. Appropriate data of ‘neither of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a written language.

Similarly to the previous chapter, a singular verb after ‘neither of’ and a noun is more common than a plural verb. If expressed by means of percentage, the result is exactly the same with the previous chapter, and thus a singular verb is found in 72% and a plural verb in 28%.

However, there are differences in the various genres. If we concentrate on singular verbs from this chapter at first, the genre that is most frequent by them is ‘academic’. This genre has 36 examples. Some of the examples are shown in (45):

- (45) (a) *In my opinion **neither of these arguments** is effective in destroying its opponent. [BNC:F9K:W_ac_humanities_arts]*
- (b) ***Neither of these conclusions** is correct. [BNC:K90:W_ac_tech_engin]*
- (c) *However, **neither of these documents** was available during the early years of PNP (...). [BNC:G1F:W_ac_polit_law_edu]*

Considering the genre ‘academic’ together with plural verbs, it has also the highest number of occurrence – 11 examples. To demonstrate these examples, (46) is provided:

- (46) (a) *As things turned out **neither of these two conditions** were met. [BNC:BMP:ac_humanities_arts]*

- (b) *Neither of these approaches necessitate the drawing of precise lines between legal and factual questions.*
[BNC:GU6:W_ac_polit_law_edu]

Apart from the genre ‘miscellaneous’, second highest number of occurrences has the category of ‘non-academic’. Together with singular verbs, it is found in 14 examples. Again, example (47) is provided:

- (47) (a) *Needless to say, neither of these two extremes was realised.*
[BNC:ARR:non_ac_nat_science]
(b) *Neither of these categories of time is included in the assessment of working hours (...).* [BNC:EBR:non_ac_soc_science]

If focused on the genre ‘non-academic’ occurring by plural verbs, it counts 4 examples. Some of the examples are demonstrated in (48):

- (48) (a) *Neither of these events, nor other similar ones, have hit the imagination of (...).* [BNC:B01:w_non_ac_soc_science]
(b) *Neither of these points were picked up in the debate.*
[BNC:ANX:non_ac_soc_science]

Interestingly enough, if we compare the results from the previous chapter, when the data containing ‘neither of’ followed by pronouns were discussed, we will find out that there is a big difference between the frequencies of the genres. Whereas in the previous chapter the ‘fiction’ appears most commonly, on the contrary in this chapter the most frequent genre is “academic” and ‘fiction’ appears the least common.

4.2.2 ‘Neither of’ followed by pronouns or nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

4.2.2.1 ‘Neither of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

In this section, I work with the data in which ‘neither of’ is followed by personal pronouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

	Spoken language –	Conversation	Other
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	total amount		
Singular verbs	1	1	0
Plural verbs	16	7	9

Table 9. Relevant data of ‘neither of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

From table 9 it can be stated that in a spoken language, the subject-verb agreement between the determinative ‘neither of’ followed by a pronoun and a verb has a tendency to attract the plural verb. A singular verb is found only in one example, whereas plural verbs appear in 16.

If we analyse the data in detail, we will find out that as far as the data with plural verbs are concerned, in 7 examples the genre is ‘conversation’ and the remaining 9 examples belong to ‘others’. The speech of conversations is mostly supposed to be rather informal. In order to show some examples from the field of conversation, (49) is provided:

- (49) (a) *Two talking Tommys, **neither of them were there.*** [BNC:KBC:S_conv]
 (b) ***Neither of them are** gonna get better, I mean you’ve been here in (...).* [BNC:KP1:S_conv]
 (c) ***Neither of them do** write, oh here he goes (...).* [BNC:KC5:S_conv]

However, there are 9 other examples as well which have the source is in e.g. ‘unclassified’ or ‘meeting’. (50) illustrates some of the sentences from the group of ‘other’:

- (50) (a) *Most people end up (unclear) **neither of them are** prepared (unclear) (...).* [BNC:HE1:S_lect_soc_science]
 (b) *They’re both, they’re both, **neither of them are** actually warts, ok?* [BNC:GY5:S_consult]

Having taken this data into consideration, it is assumed that the spoken language attracts the use of a plural verb in the matter of subject-verb agreement between ‘neither

of' followed by pronouns and then by a verb. This is different to the situation in which 'neither of' is followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language. In such a case, singular verbs are more common.

4.2.2.2 'Neither of' followed by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

This chapter deals with the data from the spoken language as well, but this time is 'neither of' followed by nouns and then by verbs.

As to the spoken language, there are no results found that would contain with plural verbs. On the contrary, there are 2 results involving singular verbs which are shown in (51). The genres that occur in these sentences are the 'public debate' and the 'courtroom', no 'conversation'.

- (51) (a) *It follows, sir, in our submission, that **neither of** these **sites performs** a greenbelt function (...).* [BNC_FMP:S_pub_debate]
(b) ***Neither of** those **sums** of course **has** to be taken into account (...).*
[BNC:JJU:S_court_room]

To summarize the last two chapters, if we take 'neither of' followed by pronouns and by nouns into consideration in a spoken language, we can conclude that together with pronouns, plural verbs are used. On the other hand, together with nouns, there is almost no evidence of spoken language.

If we compare the results concerning 'neither of' in the written language with results from the spoken language, we will find out that in the field of written language, there are 2,7 tokens per million words whereas in a spoken language, there are 1,9 tokens per million words. Thus it is to be stated that in a written language, the determinative 'neither of' occurs slightly more often.

4.3 'None of'

In this section I deal with the determinative 'none of' which has the largest amount of the data found in BNC. There are 3141 results to be found in BNC, out of these 1080 are relevant for this research. As to the data containing 'none of' followed by pronouns and then by verbs, 382 of them are appropriate. The number of relevant data including 'none of' followed by nouns and then by verbs is 698. Table 10 below shows the

numbers of applicable tokens where ‘none of’ is followed by pronouns and then by a singular/plural verb or by nouns and then by a singular/plural verb.

	Nouns				Pronouns				Total amount
	Followed by nouns and then by a singular verb		Followed by nouns and then by plural verbs		Followed by pronouns and then by a singular verb		Followed by pronouns and then by a plural verb		
None of	361	34%	337	31%	198	18%	184	17%	1080

Table 10. Relevant tokens of ‘none of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by a plural/singular verb

4.3.1 ‘None of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by verbs in a written language

Similarly to the previous chapters, I firstly focus on the data from written language.

4.3.1.1 ‘None of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language

At first, I concentrate on the determinative ‘none of’ followed by personal pronouns ‘you’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ and by singular/plural verbs. Table 10 shows all the relevant data sorted according to the genre they come from.

	Written language – total amount		Fiction	Newspapers	Academic	Non-academic	Magazine	Miscellaneous
Singular verb	182	57%	67	9	27	25	17	37
Plural verb	135	43%	55	15	11	15	12	27

Table 11. Relevant data of ‘none of’ followed by pronouns and by verbs sorted according to their genres.

From Table 11 it can be stated that after ‘none of’ followed by pronouns in a written language singular verbs are more common, and thus they are found in 57%. Plural verbs then appear in 43% of examples.

The most frequent genre by both of the options, i.e. by singular and plural verbs, is the ‘fiction’. As far as the data with singular verbs are concerned, fiction is to be found in 67 examples. As an example of the genre fiction together with singular verbs, let me provide (52):

- (52) (a) *I keep looking at pictures in books, but **none of them seems** very inspiring. [BNC:H8F:W_fict_prose]*
(b) *I do think it's rotten the way **none of you chaps speaks** French. [BNC:HRA:W_fict_prose]*

When speaking about plural verbs, the source ‘fiction’ occurs in 55 sentences. Again, the examples are demonstrated in (53). Sentence (a) is clear, ‘none of’ followed by ‘them’ and a plural verb ‘mean’. On the contrary, sentence (b) might be a bit problematic. It is a compound sentence and in both of the clauses the subject is the same, i.e. ‘none of them’. Nevertheless, the form of the predicate differs, in the first clause there is a plural verb and in the second clause there is a singular verb.

- (53) (a) *I remember thinking all numbers look the same, **none of them mean** anything on their own (...). [BNC:BMS:W_fict_prose]*
(b) ***None of them fit** together, **none of them makes** any sense. [BNC:APR:W_fict_prose]*

Another frequent genre is ‘academic’. It is the second most frequent genre in which singular verbs appear and is found in 27 sentences. Nonetheless, together with plural verbs it is not as numerous, it occurs in 11 examples. (54) demonstrates some of the sentences from academic genre involving singular verbs.

- (54) (a) ***None of us wants** to be murdered, raped or robbed. [BNC:CHL:W_ac_soc_science]*

(b) *Everything and something and nothing are all logically interlinked and **none of them makes** clear sense without the others.* [BNC:FTV:W_ac_humanities_arts]

Contrarily, (55) shows some of the examples that contain plural verbs and have their source in the academic genre:

(55) (a) ***None of them occur** with the mutant enzymes.*
[BNC:FTB:W_ac_nat_science]

(b) ***None of them give** unqualified support to freedom of expression.*
[BNC:J78:W_ac_polit_law_edu]

‘Non-academic’ genre has almost the same frequency as the ‘academic’ one.

4.3.1.2 ‘None of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a written language

This chapter deals with the determinative ‘none of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language.

	Written Language – total amount	Fiction	Newspapers	Academic	Non-academic	Magazine	Miscellaneous
Singular verbs	357 54%	34	40	96	70	40	77
Plural verbs	308 46%	38	31	89	52	28	70

Table 12. Relevant data of ‘none of’ followed by nouns and by verbs sorted according to their genres.

In this case, again the singular verbs are more frequent than the plural verbs, i.e. in 54% the verb is used in singular and in 46% there is a verb in plural. These results are almost identical with the results discovered in the previous chapter.

Although the amounts of singular or plural verbs are nearly the same in both chapters, the genres differ. Whereas in the previous chapter, the most frequent genre

was ‘fiction’, in the case when ‘none of’ is followed by nouns and then by verbs, the most common genre is ‘academic’. This genre covers 27% of the data that include singular verbs and 29% of data containing plural verbs. (56) shows some examples of the sentences from academic genre that involve singular verbs:

- (56) (a) *It is not surprising to find that **none of these mosaics is assignable** (...). [BNC:J2L:W_ac_humanities_arts]*
(b) *Although Howell was cited to the Court, **none of the three judgements refers to that decision** (...). [BNC:GVR:W_ac_polit_law_edu]*

Similarly, let me provide (57) to demonstrate some examples from academic genre with plural verbs:

- (57) (a) ***None of these approaches suggest that group politics is without substantial defects.** [BNC:G1G:W_ac_polit_law_edu]*
(b) *Unfortunately, **none of the available tests meet these goals.** [BNC:HU4:W_ac_medicine]*

Apart from ‘miscellaneous’, the second most frequent genre is ‘non-academic’. Together with singular verbs, it is found in 70 sentences and together with plural verbs in 52.

Also genres ‘newspapers’ or ‘magazine’ are to be found occasionally. However, the genre that occurs the least often is ‘fiction’. It appears only in 34 sentences with singular verbs and in 38 sentences with plural verbs.

To summarize these two chapters, in both of them it is proved that the singular verbs after ‘none of’ followed by either pronouns and then by verbs or by nouns and then by verbs are more frequent than the plural verbs. Nevertheless, there is a remarkable difference between the genres in which the sentences occur. Whereas in chapter 4.3.1.1 the most commonly used genre is ‘fiction’, in chapter 4.3.1.2 it is ‘academic’. Interestingly enough, in the second chapter the category of fiction has the smallest number of evidence.

If compared to the results from the chapter 4.2.1 in which the demonstrative ‘neither of’ in a written language is discussed, the results are identical, i.e. when

followed by pronouns, the genre ‘fiction’ occurs the most frequently. Contrarily, when followed by nouns, in most cases the genre ‘academic’ appears.

4.3.2 ‘None of’ followed by pronouns/nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

In this section, I concentrate on the determinative ‘none of’ followed by either personal pronouns and then by verbs or by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

4.3.2.1 ‘None of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

Firstly, I deal with ‘none of’ followed by pronouns and by verbs in sentences their source is spoken. From Table 13 it can be deduced that in this case, the plural verb is used more commonly, and thus in 49 sentences. On the contrary, a singular verb is found only in 16 examples.

	Spoken language – total amount	Conversation	Others
Singular verb	16	4	12
Plural verb	49	18	31

Table 13. Relevant data of ‘none of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

Again, I distinguish between ‘conversation’ and ‘others’. Both with singular and plural verbs, the category ‘others’ is more frequent than conversation. As an example for conversation found together with singular verbs, (58) is demonstrated:

- (58) (a) *Trouble is **none of them** knows about I up there.*
[BNC:KBA:S_conv]
- (b) *You see, **none of them’s** got the places tiled all over have.*
[BNC:KCF:S_conv]

With plural verbs, ‘conversation’ is slightly more frequent, and thus it is found in 18 examples, some of them are shown in (59):

- (59) (a) *Well **none of them are** are they?* [BNC:KBE:S_conv]

- (b) *Well we were gonna have a look at the antique places but **none of them were open**.* [BNC:KDM:S_conv]

Since the mixed category ‘others’ is more common, I would like to provide some examples of it as well. For that reason, (60) is shown, in which ‘none of’ is followed by pronouns and by singular verbs:

- (60) (a) *None of (unclear) **none of them has** got in contact with me.*
[BNC:D97:S_meeting]
- (b) *And **none of us admits** to being alive when all this happened (...).*
[BNC:KGP:S_unclassified]

Also some of the examples that are found together with the plural verbs are presented in (61):

- (61) (a) *Well we need a politician to tell us, because **none of us are** very clear.* [BNC:HYY:S_meeting]
- (b) *When you watch Star Trek, as I’m sure you all do, **none of you watch** serious television I’m sure.*
[BNC:HUM:S_lect_soc_science]

In comparison to the chapter 4.3.1.1 in which ‘none of’ followed by pronouns and then by verbs in a written language was discussed, there is a difference between the frequencies of the usage of either singular or plural verbs. Whereas in the written language, singular verbs are used more commonly, in a spoken language the plural verbs occur more often.

4.3.2.2 ‘None of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language

Having discussed ‘none of’ followed by pronouns in the previous chapter, now I concentrate on the situation when ‘none of’ is followed by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

	Spoken language – total amount	Conversation	Others
Singular verb	4	0	4

Plural verb	29	5	24
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Table 14. Relevant data of ‘none of’ followed by nouns and then by verbs in a spoken language.

Similarly to the previous chapter, this one also proves that in a spoken language there is a tendency to use plural verbs, which are found in 29 sentences, rather than singular verbs that occur in 4 sentences. It appears again that the category of ‘others’ is more common than ‘conversation’. By singular verbs, all the 4 sentences have their source in ‘others’, particularly in two sentences the genres are ‘classroom’, then ‘speech scripted’ and the last one is ‘courtroom’.

As far as plural verbs are concerned, in 24 sentences they occur in the genre of ‘others’ and in 5 sentences in ‘conversation’. At first, I would like to provide some examples of ‘others’:

(62) (a) *You see, **none of these laws** actually **mention** homosexuality at all.* [BNC:KRT:S_brdcast_news]

(b) *My Lords I am left in the slight dilemma that erm I’m not er **none of the amendments** we’re discussing **are** absolutely ideal from my point of view (...).* [BNC:JSJ:S_parliament]

(63) Shows some examples from the field of ‘conversation’:

(63) (a) *You are the reason why I left the school, you know, **none of the girls are** happy by their upper sixth (...).* [BNC:KBB:S_conv]

(b) *Well it getting difference now here with most things, I mean now, er **none of the shop keepers are** saa- (...).* [BNC:KBB:S_conv]

If compared to the chapter 4.3.1.2, in which ‘none of’ is followed by nouns in a written language, the results are again different from the point of view of the frequencies of plural or singular verbs. Whereas in a written language the singular verbs are more common, in a spoken language it is vice versa.

To conclude, it is proved that by both of the options in which ‘none of’ is followed by pronouns or by nouns and then by verbs in a written language, singular verbs are preferred. However, in case when ‘none of’ is used in a spoken language, there is a tendency to use plural verbs.

If we would like to compare the frequencies of occurrence of 'none of' in a written and in a spoken language, it is to be claimed that as to the written language, there are 10,9 tokens per million words and as to the spoken language, there are 9,8 tokens per million words found in BNC. Thus it can be claimed that the occurrence in both forms of language is nearly the same.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to examine the determinatives ‘either of’, ‘neither of’ and ‘none of’ in terms of their subject-verb agreement and either to confirm or disprove the hypothesis based on Quirk et al. (1997, 764) that firstly after “‘either’ and ‘neither’ the singular is generally used”. On the contrary, as far as ‘none of’ is concerned, “plural is even more preferred” (ibid). Secondly, Quirk et al. (1997, 764) and Huddleston et al. (2002, 507) claim that after ‘either of’ and ‘neither of’ also plural might be used, but rather in an informal language. Since neither of them provides any definition of formal or informal language, I analyse the data in BNC according to the source of the language they come from, i.e. either written or spoken, and attempt to compare the results. Moreover, I sort the data with the help of different genres found in BNC and if possible, I try to decide on the level of formality. As to the spoken language, I differentiate between the source of ‘conversation’ and the mixed genre ‘others’ because I expect conversation to be more informal than prepared utterances contained in ‘others’. I distinguish between the situation when the determinatives are followed by pronouns and then by verbs or by nouns and then by verbs as well.

If we concentrate only on the general results, i.e. on the frequency of the usage of either singular or plural verbs, it is to be claimed that as far as ‘either of’ is concerned, the singular verbs occur in 42 sentences, whereas plural verbs appear in 31 examples. For that reason, the hypothesis is confirmed. Also by ‘neither of’ is the hypothesis proved to be right, since there are 176 sentences containing singular verbs and 83 sentences comprising plural verbs. However, with ‘none of’, the hypothesis is proved to be wrong. Singular verbs are found in 559 sentences, whereas plural verbs appear in 521 examples.

Now I would like to focus on the results in a greater detail, which means that I differentiate between the different sources of the data and between the case when the determinatives are followed by pronouns or by nouns and then by verbs. I also try to confirm or disprove the hypotheses again, this time for more specific cases.

To begin with, I analyse the data containing the determinative ‘either of’ which has the smallest amount of data found in BNC. At first, I concentrate on the data their source is written. In case that ‘either of’ is followed by pronouns, the hypothesis based on Quirk et al. (1997, 764) that the singular is preferred, is disproved since there are 17 sentences including plural verbs and 15 sentences involving singular verbs. On the

contrary, in case that 'either of' is followed by nouns, the same hypothesis is confirmed because there are 26 sentences with singular verbs and 7 sentences with plural verbs. If speaking about the various genres, there are also differences, and thus in the chapter about 'either of' followed by pronouns. Here the most frequent genre is 'fiction', whereas in the section dealing with 'either of' followed by nouns, the genre that occurs most commonly is 'academic' and 'fiction' is the least represented genre. Since the 'academic' genre is supposed to be rather formal, it can be claimed that if 'either of' is followed by nouns, the usage tends to be formal as well and the subject-verb agreement presupposes a singular verb.

Secondly I focus on the data containing 'either of' in a spoken language. If followed by pronouns, we tend to use the plural forms of verbs which are found in all 6 examples. Therefore the hypothesis by Quirk (1997, 764) is disproved. As to the genres, there is no difference between 'conversation' and 'others'. Both of these groups contain 3 examples. On the other hand, if 'either' of is followed by nouns, there are only 2 examples to be found in BNC, and thus one of them contains a plural verb and another one a singular verb.

To sum the determinative 'either of' up, it is to be claimed that if followed by pronouns in a written language, plural verbs are slightly more common. If followed by nouns, there is a tendency to use the singular verbs. As to the spoken language, plural verbs are more frequent.

Similarly, I analyse the data dealing with the determinative 'neither of'. First of all, I would like to discuss the written language. In case that 'neither of' is followed by pronouns, the hypothesis of Quirk et al. (1997, 764) that a singular verb is more common, is proved as there are 95 sentences containing singular verbs and 53 containing plural verbs. Likewise also data in which 'neither of' is followed by nouns confirm the Quirk et al.'s hypothesis. There are 78 sentences with singular verbs and 30 with plural verbs. If we concentrate on the genres, the situation is very similar to the one about 'either of', and thus if 'neither of' is followed by pronouns, the most frequent genre is 'fiction'. On the other hand, if followed by nouns, the most frequent genre is again 'academic' and 'fiction' is the least common.

Now I concern on the data in which 'neither of' is found in a spoken language. As far as the data involving pronouns are concerned, the hypothesis is disproved as there are 16 examples involving plural verbs and only 1 example with singular verbs. The division to the 'conversation' and 'others' seems to be inadequate as there are no

differences between them. If ‘neither of’ is followed by nouns, there are only 2 examples, both of them containing singular verbs.

To summarise the determinative ‘neither of’, in the field of written language the hypothesis is proved and there is the tendency to use rather singular verbs. However, in the area of spoken language, together with pronouns the hypothesis is disproved and the plural verbs are used more frequently. Together with nouns, the hypothesis is again confirmed.

Lately I analyse the determinative ‘none of’ which has the largest amount of data found in BNC. To start with I again concentrate on the data their source is written. In case that ‘none of’ is followed by pronouns, the hypothesis in Quirk et al. (1997, 764) that the plural verbs are preferred, is disproved. There are 182 results containing singular verbs and 135 comprising plural verbs. As to the genres, the most frequent is ‘fiction’. Similarly also if ‘none of’ is followed by nouns, singular verbs are used more commonly, and thus in 357 sentences, whereas plural verbs occur in 308 examples. For that reason, the hypothesis is again falsified. Although the results about singular or plural verbs are the same in both cases, i.e. singular forms of verbs are more common, the genres differ. If followed by nouns, the most common genre is again ‘academic’ and the least common is ‘fiction’.

Now I would like to focus on ‘none of’ in a spoken language. If followed by pronouns, the plural verbs occur in 49 sentences, while singular verbs appear in 16 sentences. Thus the hypothesis is confirmed and plural verbs are used more frequently. As to the genres, the one that is more common is the mix genre ‘others’, thereby there is no proved difference between the spontaneous utterance and prepared speech. Similarly, also if ‘none of’ is followed by nouns, the hypothesis is proved as well since there are 29 sentences containing plural verbs and 4 comprising singular verbs. Again, the genre ‘others’ is more common than ‘conversation’.

In conclusion, in case that ‘none of’ occurs in a written language, it is proved that there is a tendency to use the singular verbs more often than plural verbs, i.e. the hypothesis provided by Quirk et al. (1997, 764) is disproved. On the other hand, if in spoken language, the plural verbs are preferred, so the hypothesis is confirmed.

If we would like to compare all the determinatives ‘neither of’, ‘either of’ and ‘none of’, it can be summarised that in a written language, there is the difference in genres in case that the determinatives are followed either by pronouns or by nouns. If

followed by pronouns, the genre that occurs most frequently by all of them is the 'fiction'. On the contrary, if followed by nouns, the most common genre is 'academic'.

This thesis deals with the determinatives 'either of', 'neither of' and 'none of' only in the field of British English, not American. Therefore I suggest that also American English might be studied and the results compared to the results from this study.

The most problematic part of the study is that the hypotheses provided by Quirk et al. (1997, 764) and Huddleston et al. (2002, 507) do not contain any definition of formal and informal language. For that reason, I was not able either to confirm or to disprove their hypotheses exactly, even with the help of analysis of different genres found in BNC. On the other hand, the results show clearly the frequency of the usage of either singular or plural verbs. Another problem occurs in the section dealing with the determinative 'either of' as the amount of the data is rather small. For that reason, the provided conclusions cannot be claimed with 100% certainty.

CZECH SUMMARY

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá anglickými determinanty ,neither of', ,either of' and ,none of' a jejich shodou podmětu s přísudkem v britské angličtině. Shoda podmětu s přísudkem v tomto případě není zcela jasně stanovena, sloveso může být použito jak v jednotném, tak v množném čísle.

V teoretické části se nejprve zabývám rozdílem mezi ,either', ,neither' a ,none' a ,either of', ,neither of' a ,none of'. Dále uvádím vymezení slovního druhu výše uvedených slovních spojení, jelikož různí lingvisté používají různou terminologii. Např. Quirk et al. (1997, 764) uvádí, že se jedná o neurčitá zájmena, zatímco Huddleston et al. (2002, 387) tvrdí, že se jedná o determinanty. Další kapitola teoretické části zpracovává již zmiňované téma shody podmětu s přísudkem. Na začátku jsou uvedena obecná pravidla, následují výjimky pravidel, druhy shody (,grammatical concord', ,notional concord'), a jako poslední se objevuje kapitola pojednávající o neurčitých výrazech jako podmětu.

Metodologická část práce ukazuje metody práce s Britským Národním Korpusem (dále jen BNC), postup při vyhledávání dat, manuální třídění a zahrnuje také některé problémy, které se během výzkumu vyskytly.

V praktické části jsou zpracovány výsledky z korpusového zkoumání. Snažím se buď vyvrátit nebo potvrdit hypotézu uváděnou Quirkem et al. (1997, 764), že po ,either of' a ,neither of' je většinou používáno sloveso v singuláru a po ,none of' sloveso v plurálu. Dále uvádí, že po ,either of' a ,neither of' může následovat i sloveso v plurálu, ale většinou v neformálním jazyce. Jelikož ale neuvádí žádnou definici rozlišující formální a neformální jazyk, je tato hypotéza poněkud vágní. Proto vycházím z dělení na ,žánry' poskytované BNC a snažím se z nich vyvodit závěry. Rozlišuji mezi případy, kdy jsou determinanty následovány podstatnými jmény nebo osobními zájmeny. Dále rozděluji případy, kdy zdrojovým jazykem je jazyk mluvený nebo psaný. V psaném jazyce pak rozlišuji mezi žánrem ,conversation' a všechny ostatní žánry shrnuji do skupiny ,others'. Předpokládám totiž, že u konverzace se vyskytuje vyšší míra neformálnosti, protože se jedná o nepřipravenou, spontánní řeč. Na druhé straně u ostatních žánrů, jako jsou třeba veřejné debaty a rozhlas, se jedná většinou o předem připravenou řeč a míra formálnosti by tak měla být vyšší.

Výsledky ukazují, že co se týče ,either of', hypotéza o častějším užití slovesa v singuláru, je potvrzena. Sloveso v singuláru se vyskytuje celkem ve 42 případech,

zatímco v plurálu ve 31 případech. Zaměříme-li se na ,neither of', sloveso v jednotném čísle najdeme ve 176 větách, zatímco sloveso v množném čísle se nachází v 83 případech. Můžeme tedy znovu potvrdit hypotézu. Nakonec jsem zkoumala ,none of', které mělo také nejvyšší počet výskytů v BNC. Singulárové sloveso se tu nachází v 559 větách, zatímco plurálové v 521 případech. Protože Quirk et al. (1997, 764) tvrdí, že po ,none of' je preferováno sloveso v plurálu, je tato hypotéza vyvrácena.

ANOTACE

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Název anglicky:	Subject-Verb Agreement after ‚Neither of‘, ‚Either of‘ and ‚None of‘: A Corpus-Based Study
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Anotace v ČJ:	Bakalářská práce se zabývá anglickými determinanty ‚neither of‘, ‚either of‘ a ‚none of‘ a jejich shodou podmětu s přísudkem s využitím Britského Národního Korpusu.
Anotace v AJ:	This thesis deals with determinatives ‚neither of‘, ‚either of‘ and ‚none of‘ and with their subject-verb

agreement. The data are analysed in the British National Corpus (BNC).

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