



An Analysis of Students' Error in Constructing Passive Voice

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the students' error in constructing passive voice. This study uses descriptive qualitative research. The sample of this study is upgrading class C of Sunan Drajat Female Islamic Boarding School that consists of 15 students. The data were collected by using test and interview. The test is writing test which consists of 5 sentences of Present Tense including simple present, present continuous, present future, present perfect & present future perfect. The students were asked to change those 5 sentences into passive voice. Then the data would be analyzed based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay's theory including omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Furthermore, the students' difficulty in changing active sentence into passive sentence will be analyzed too based on passive sentence structure including the usage of "subject, be, V3, and object". The result of the research indicates that the error total of omission was 13 errors with the percentages of 21%, addition was 3 errors with the percentages of 10%, misordering was 7 errors with the percentages of 24%, and misformation was 13 errors with the percentages of 45%. Most of the students do error in the usage of "be, V3, and object". In the case of "be", the students don't know the appropriate auxiliary for the subject and for the tenses in passive form. In addition, in the case of V3 usage, the students don't know about regular and irregular verb so that they do error in choosing the correct of V3. Furthermore, the students' lack mastery of pronoun makes them do error in choosing the appropriate object which the subject and object pronoun have different form.

Keywords: *Analyzing, Error, Active, Passive, Present Tense*

INTRODUCTION

English has become international language that used in the various aspects of life likes education. In education, english becomes a subject that should be learnt by students from kindergarten until college. In the English learning process, there are four skills that should be mastered by students including speaking, writing, listening and reading. In addition, each of these skills need components that related to each other, they are pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, and the one that needs to understand more is grammar because it has many rules. Brown (2001) explains that grammar is a rule for bringing together meaningful parts of language to convey an intelligible message. Furthermore, Harmer (2001) states that grammar as the description of the way in which words can change their form and can be combined into sentences in the language (Sari, Melani, Nurhayani, 2024:165). According to Cowan (2008) as cited in Septy and Juliani (2023:9880), grammar is a set of rules that describe how words and groups of words can be organized to form sentences in a specific language. Understanding and mastering grammar is crucial for effective communication and language proficiency. It can be conclude that grammar has important role in constructing sentence well. When we have knowledge of grammar and use it appropriately, we can deliver the message that we want to share to the other, we can comprehend the explanation that is told us by the other people, and also we can comprehend the reading well. Unfortunately, many students are bored learning about grammar. As stated by Thornbury (1999) as cited

in Sari et.al (2024), reality grammar is not attractive for students. It is happened because students get difficulty in understanding the grammar.

One of the grammar aspect that should be studied by students is Passive Voice. According to Joshi, as cited in Agustini (2017), passive voice is a type of sentence in which the subject is acted upon by the verb. In addition, Berry (2012:38) as cited in Shavira et.al (2023) stated that passive sentences is formed by active sentence which make the object into subject and changes the verb and use a preposition "by". That's why students are difficult in changing active sentence into passive sentence. Besides, there are changing between subject & object in the form of them, the form of tense becomes the first factor, because every tenses has different formula both active and passive sentence. We know that the characteristic of passive sentence is usage "be+V3", and "be" of each tenses are different. That's why students do an error in transforming active into passive sentence. An error is a systematic deviation when the learner has not learned any of it and consequently gets it wrong. An error is happened because of the lack of target language rule mastery. An error is probable to appear repeatedly and is not recognized as an error. Dulay (1982) as cited in Sari et.al (2022:23) categorizes errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy, including: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

1. Omission

The error of omission is signed with the absence of a morpheme or an item that must appear in a well-formed sentence.

Example:

Active sentece : We make a cake

Passive sentence : A cake made by us (omission "is")

It should be : A cake is made by us

2. Addition

The error of addition is signed with the presence of a morpheme or an item that must not appear in a well-formed sentence

Active sentece : They are preparing dinner

Passive sentence : Dinner are is being prepared by them (addition "are")

It should be : Dinner is being prepared by them

3. Misformation

The error of misformation is signed by using the wrong form of morpheme or structure

Active sentece : He will take an exam tomorrow

Passive sentence : An exam will been taken by him tomorrow (misformation "been")

It should be : An exam will be taken by him tomorrow

4. Misordering

The last error category is the error of misordering which is signed with incorrect placement of morpheme.

Active sentece : She has cleaned the room

Passive sentence : The room has cleaned been by her (misordering "cleaned been")

It should be : The room has been cleaned by her

The researcher takes some previous study about students' difficulty in changing active into passive. The first study is conducted by Shavira e.al (2023) stated that the most dominant kind in their research was difficulty in changing auxiliary verb and difficulty in changing past participle. The second study is conducted by Sari et.al (2022) stated that the most common errors made by students was misformation, which was most frequently produced by the students with a total error of 247 or 52%. The third study is conducted by Septy & Juliani (2023) stated that students make 1134.5 errors, and the highest is



misformation (47.55%). Based on these studies, the researcher conduct this study to know the students' difficulty in construction into passive voice.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. According to Moleong (2017:6) as cited in Shavira et.al (2023) stated that qualitative research is the research that purpose for understanding the phenomenon about thing that experience by the subject of the research such as behaviorism, perception, motivation, action, and another. The researcher used descriptive method to describe the data was that collected. The data contained a description of students' difficulties in changing active sentence into passive sentence. This method was used because it is appropriate to the objectives of the research which focuses on students' errors in constructing into passive voice. In this research, the researcher classified the errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay's theory, including: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

The sample of this research is the upgrading students class C of female dormitory in Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School. There are 15 students as the sample in this study. The data were collected by using test and interview. The test is writing test which consists of 5 sentences of Present Tense including simple present, present continuous, present future, present perfect & present future perfect. The students were asked to change those 5 sentences into passive voice. Then the data would be analyzed based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay's theory. The researcher counted the percentage of errors by using the formula as follows:

$$P = F/N \times 100\%$$

P = The percentage

F = The frequency of error

N = The total number of errors

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the students' error analysis result, the total were 29. The total error of omission was 13 errors with the percentages of 21%, addition was 3 errors with the percentages of 10%, misordering was 7 errors with the percentages of 24%, and misformation was 13 errors with the percentages of 45%. It can be concluded that the highest frequency and the percentage of errors made by the students is misformation with 13 errors and the percentages of 45%. The frequency and the percentages of students' error could be seen in table 1 below:

Table 1. The Frequency and Percentages of Error Types

No	Name	Omission	Addition	Misordering	Misformation	Total
1.	Student 1	0	0	1	2	3
2.	Student 2	0	0	1	1	2
3.	Student 3	0	0	1	1	2
4.	Student 4	0	1	1	0	2
5.	Student 5	0	0	0	1	1
6.	Student 6	2	0	0	1	3
7.	Student 7	1	1	1	0	3
8.	Student 8	0	0	0	1	1
9.	Student 9	0	1	1	0	2
10.	Student 10	0	0	1	1	2

11.	Student 11	2	0	0	1	3
12.	Student 12	0	0	0	1	1
13.	Student 13	0	0	0	0	0
14.	Student 14	1	0	0	2	3
15.	Student 15	0	0	0	1	1
Total		6	3	7	13	29
Errors' Percentage		21%	10%	24%	45%	100%

The formula of passive voice is different with the active sentence. The passive voice has characteristic "Be+V3". Furthermore, the subject of the active sentence will be object in the passive voice, while the object of the active voice will be subject in the passive voice. The forms of error made by the students can be seen in the table 2 below:

Table 2. The Forms of Error in Constructing Passive Voice

No	Tenses	Sentence	Sentence Structure							
			Subject		Be		V3		Object	
			C	IC	C	IC	C	IC	C	IC
1.	Simple Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC = She buys this camera today ▪ PV = This camera is bought by her today 	15	0	15	0	12	3	12	3
2.	Present Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC = They are painting my office ▪ PV = My office is being painted by them 	15	0	8	7	15	0	15	0
3.	Present Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC = They will punish him ▪ PV = He will be punished by them 	15	0	12	3	9	6	7	8
4.	Present Perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC = They have done the work ▪ PV = The work has been done by them 	15	0	7	8	15	0	6	9
5.	Present Future Perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC = They will have completed the new bridge by March ▪ PV = The new bridge will have been completed by them by March 	15	0	13	2	15	0	15	0
Total				0		20		9		20
<i>Note : C is correct, while IC is incorrect</i>										



Based on the table 2 above. We can see that in the Simple Present, the students made error in the usage of “V3 and Object”, each of them were 3 students making errors. In the Present Continuous, there were 7 students making error in usage of “Be”. In the Present Future, the students made error in the usage of “Be, V3, and Object” which there were 3 errors in Be, 6 errors in V3, and 8 errors in Object. In the Present Perfect, there are 8 errors in the usage of “Be” and 9 errors in the usage of “Object” that made by students. And the last, in the Present Future Perfect, there are 2 errors made by students in the usage of “Be”. It can be conclude that the form of “Be” and “Object” are errors that often done by students in constructing into Passive Voice form.

1. Simple Present = She buys this camera today

 V3

This camera is **buyed** by her today (misformation)

In this case of “V3”, the students do misformation error, especially the V3 usage of “buy” which the correct one is “bought” because the word “buy” includes irregular verb.

2. Present Continuous = They are painting my office

 Be

My office **are** being painted by them (misformation)

My office **is** painted by them (omission)

In this case of error in the usage of “be”, the students do misformation and omission errors. In the misformation error, the students do error of “be” which the choices of verb is adjusted with the subject of the sentence not the object of the sentence. The correct verb should be “is” for the subject of “my office” because it includes the singular noun. While in the omission error, the students don’t add “being” after tobe “is” which is the formula of passive voice in the present continuous form should add “being” after tobe.

3. Present Future = They will punish him

 Be

He will punished by they (omission & misformation)


He punished will be by us (misordering & misformation)

In this error of the usage of “be”, the students do the errors of omission, misformation, and misordering. For mission error, the students don’t add the word “be” after the modal of “will” which the formula of passive voice in the simple present future tense is “will + be+ v3”. And the next case is about error of misordering which the students do error in arranging the words in constructing into passive voice which is the word “punished” is added after modal of “will be” based on the formula of Passive Voice in the Present Future.

 V3

He will be punish by them (misformation)

In this case of V3, the students make error of misformation which is the usage of verb in passive voice is V3 for all of the tenses. So the correct is “punished” not “punish”.

 Object

He will punished by they (omission & misformation)

He will be punish by us (misformation)

The students do error of omission and misformation. In the error of misformation, the students do error in the usage of the object of the sentence, the correct object should be “them” not “they” or “us” based on the pronoun of part of speech, the object form of “they” is “them”, while “us” is object form of “we.”

4. Present Perfect = They have just done the work

✚ Be

The work have been done by them (misformation)

The work are have been done by us (addition & misformation)

The work has done by them (omission)

In this case, the students do errors of misformation, addition & omission. In the error of misformation, the students do error of choosing the auxiliary of the subject “the work” which is the correct is “has” not “have” because the subject “the work” is singular noun. In the error of addition, the students do error by adding the auxiliary tobe “are” which it is not needed and the auxiliary “have” is incorrect which it should be “has” as the correct one. And in the error of omission, the students don’t add “been” after auxiliary “has” which the formula of passive voice in the present perfect is “has/have + been + v3”.

✚ Object

The work have been done by they (misformation)

The work are have been done by us (addition & misformation)

In this case of object usage, students do errors in the misformation and addition type. In the misformation error, students do error of usage of object pronoun of “they” which the correct is “them” not “they” or “us”.

5. Present Future Perfect = They will have completed the new bridge by March

✚ Be

The new bridge will has been completed by them by March (misformation)

In this case, the students do error in the usage of auxiliary which after auxiliary modal “will” is auxiliary “have” not “has”. The formula of passive voice in the present future perfect is “will have + been + v3”.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to know the students’ difficulty in constructing into passive voice. Based on the result and discussion, the researcher concludes that there are some difficulties that made by students in changing active sentence into passive sentence causing the students do some errors likes omission, addition, misordering, and misformation. The error total of omission was 13 errors with the percentages of 21%, addition was 3 errors with the percentages of 10%, misordering was 7 errors with the percentages of 24%, and misformation was 13 errors with the percentages of 45%. Most of the students do error in the usage of “be, V3, and object”. In the usage of “be”, many of the students don’t know the appropriate auxiliary based on the subject of the sentence, such as the usage of auxiliary “have and has” in the present perfect tense. Beside that they don’t know about the addition “be” in the passive voice likes “be” for present future, “being” for present continuous, and “been”for present perfect. In addition, in the case of V3 usage, the students don’t know that there are regular and irregular verb so that they do error in choosing the correct of V3. Futhermore, the lack mastery of pronoun which the subject and object pronoun have different form, such as subject pronoun of “they” will change to be “them” as the object.



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