

ELT FORUM 7 (1) (2018)

**Journal of English Language Teaching**

http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/elt

STUDENTS’ DIFFICULTIES IN CHANGING ACTIVE VOICE INTO PASSIVE VOICE IN SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE AND SIMPLE PAST TENSE

Vicky Fawzah, Rohani 

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

**Article Info**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Article History:* Received in April 2017

Approved in May 2017 Published in July 2017

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Keywords* *error analysis, active voice, passive voice, students difficulties, cause of students difficulties*.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Abstract**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This study attempted to identify the kind of students’ difficulties in changing active voice into passive voice in simple present tense and simple past tense, and the cause of difficulties in changing active voice into passive voice in simple past tense and simple present tense. Descriptive qualitative study was used and the subject of this study was the ninth grade students of SMP N 2 Pemalang in the academic year of 2016/2017. The sampling process was administered by applying a random sampling technique. I collected the data by giving try out test in IX H and real test in IX G of SMP Negeri 2 Pemalang. The result of this research showed that in changing active voice into passive voice in simple present tense and simple past tense students faced difficulties in determining: pronoun (57 errors or 7.41%), to be (385 errors or 50.06%), past participle (177 errors or 23.01%), misordering (12.09%), passive order but active form (37 errors or 4.81%), and active order but passive form (20 errors or 2.60%). Based on the interview with the students, the cause of errors can be categorized into interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual errors happened because the interference of a native language into a target language, while intralingual error happened because of the complexity of the target language.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | © 2018 Universitas Negeri Semarang |
|  |  |
|  Correspondent Address: | ISSN 2252-6706 |
| B3 Building FBS Unnes |  |
| Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229 |  |
| E-mail: Vickyfawzah94@gmail.com |  |

## INTRODUCTION

#### English is a global language that is used in Indonesia as a foreign language. It means that we used English not for daily speaking. We, Indonesian have learnt English as a subject in our school since Junior High School until University level. In fact, some elementary schools also teach English as an additional subject. Learning a foreign language means learning its sound, grammar, lexical and cultural systems. The meaning of any utterance of language is the combination of those systems reflected in it. Rivers (1981) said that among those systems, grammar was the most important one because it was the core of language. Thus, in learning language, which covers the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, grammars lessons should be given the greatest attention. Good grammar is needed to make a correct form of a sentence. By mastering grammar, the students will know how to make meaningful utterances using the right pattern and rules.

#### One of the pattern the students should know about is passive voice. Azar (1989) stated that in the passive, the object of an active verb became the subject of the passive verb. In active voice the subject is the doer, while in the passive voice the subject receives the action. In addition only transitive verbs are used in the passive. Furthermore, Riyanto (2007) persuaded that passive voice was used when we want to say that the subject (I, We, They, You, He, She, and It) was not the doer, but receives an action. Therefore, we can summarize that passive voice is a sentence where the subject receives the action, and only a sentence which has transitive verb that can be changed into passive voice. Basically, passive voice is formed with the pattern is: be + past participle (Verb3).

#### Passive voice in Junior high school is taught in IX graders. Based on the preliminary interview with the English teacher of SMP N 2 Pemalang, it showed that her students have difficulties in changing active voice into passive voice because the students’ grammar mastery is low. In addition, the students were confused of changing Past Participle (Verb 3) and the position of subject and object in a sentence. They cannot differentiate some words belonging to regular verb or irregular verb. Dullay, et.al. (1982) stated that the error in passive voice were error in misformation of passive verb, active order but passive form, absent or wrong position before agent, passive order but active form.

#### These could happen because mastering grammar can be said complicated for Indonesia learner. They find many differences in grammar, sound system and culture concepts between English and Indonesian language. In English grammar, we are acquainted with many tenses, and several tenses need to be adjusted with the past verb, such as in simple past tense. These differences can cause learning problems such as an error. Errors happens when the learner lack of knowledge and they do not recognize their mistakes, so it cannot to be self-corrected. James (1998) identify a language error as an unsuccessful bit of language. He added that language learners cannot correct their errors until they have additional knowledge on the topic.

#### Error can be classified into some category. According to Corder (1973), there are four classification of errors, such as: omission (means that learners often leave out the third person singular morpheme –s, the vplural marker -s, and the past tense inflectional –ed), addition (Learners not only commit elements which they regard as redundant but also add redundant element), Selection (Learners commit errors in pronunciation, morphology, syntax and vocabulary, due to the selection of the wrong phoneme, structure vocabulary item), and ordering (can occur in morphological level miss ordering of bound morpheme in English is perhaps less frequent, given their limited number).

#### The causes of error can be divided into Interlingual errors and Intralingual errors. Brown (2000) says “interlingual errors happened because the interference of a mother tongue into a target language. While, Intralingual error are those that reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under rules apply.”

#### According to Somphong (2013), conducting error analysis is therefore one of the best ways to describe and explain errors committed by the second language learners. Nzama (2010) argued that error analysis was useful in second language learning because it revealed to the teachers, syllabus designers or textbook writers of what the problem areas were. So we could design remedial exercises and focus more attention on the ‘trouble shooting’ areas, as it were. Furthermore, Shridhar (1981) explained about the step of error analysis such as: Collection of data (either from a, free composition by students on given them or from examination answer), Identification of errors, Collection into error types, Statement of relative frequency of error types, Identification of the areas of difficulty in the target language and therapy (remedial, drill. Lesson).

## METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

#### This study which belongs to qualitative case study research was conducted in SMP Negeri 2 Pemalang in the academic year 2016/2017. In this qualitative method, descriptive approach was applied to explain and gives detail view of the real condition and situation about phenomena being observed without mannered. In this case, I only reveal what I try to find out from the object related to the primary aim of this study

####  Besides, tryout test was conducted before the real test. It was used to measure if the test items were suitable or not to use in this research. The tryout itself was conducted on Thursday, 7th October 2016. There were 80 items about changing active voice into passive voice in Simple Present Tense and Simple Past Tense which were divided into 2 different instructions. The tryout test was taken by 29 students of IXH. Furthermore, Product Moment formula was used to calculate the validity of the try out. From the calculation, there were 50 item numbers which were valid.

#### While, the reliability was calculated by using Kuder Richardson 20. In order to gain good instrument for research, the test should be measured the index of reliability. If r11 > rtable, it could be considered that the instrument was reliable. From the computation of the formula, it was found that the instrument was reliable because the calculation showed that value of r11 (0.944) was higher than the value of rtable where the rtable was 0.374.

####  After the validity and reliability of the tryout were found, the real test was conducted. The items which was not valid in tryout test was omitted and the real test was only used the items that fulfilled the criteria. The real test was conducted on Thursday, 11 October 2016. The subject of the real test was IXG which consists of 28 students. The real test used 50 questions which were divided into 2 parts of the test.

#### Besides using a test, I also conducted an interview to the students and the teacher. The interview conducted after they have done the real test. I interview the teacher around her experience in English teaching and her difficulty in teaching especially in passive voice. There were 8 open-ended interview questions for teacher and 8 open-ended questions for students. The interview was taken only by 30% students as a representative of the research.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### The real test was conducted on Thursday, 11 October 2016. The subject of the real test was IXG which consists of 29 students. After collecting and analyzing the data, some errors were found which were classified into 6 classifications. Those 6 classifications were errors in based on the errors that the students made, we can conclude that the students faced a difficulties in: using proper pronoun, using proper to be, using the proper past participle (include omission, addition, regular, and irregular verb), using the word order (misordering), students difficulties in passive order but active form, and students difficulties in active form but passive order. Then, I found 769 errors made by the students with the most happened in determining proper to be. Here were the brief explanation about the students difficulties in changing active into passive voice in simple present and simple past tenses in SMP Negeri 2 Pemalang.

### Students difficulties in changing active voice into passive voice in Simple Present Tense and Simple Past Tense

#### *Students difficulties in determining pronoun*

#### In active voice, the pattern is subject plus verb plus object. While in changing active voice into passive voice, the object preceded the verb and subject is moved after verb. It should change the active into passive sentence. The object of the active sentence become subject in the passive sentences and if the object of the active sentence is the object pronoun, so the subject in the passive sentence should become personal pronoun. The sentence is incorrect because the object of the sentence does not become personal pronoun in passive sentence.

#### For example:

#### She always sings a love song (active voice)

#### A love song is always sung by she (students answer)

#### From the example above, the active sentence uses third person singular than it should be changed into objective personal pronoun in the passive. The objective pronoun for she is her, so the students should use her instead of she.

#### In order to calculate the percentage of students who made error in using pronoun. I employed the following formula:

#### P = n1 x 100%

#### ∑n

#### P = 57 X 100 %

####  769

#### = 7.41%

#### *Student difficulties in auxiliary be*

#### In changing active voice into passive voice the students should know and aware of the “to be” that will be used with considering the object that is placed as a new subject. Some of the students still used the incorrect to be. Here, I tried to review briefly about the errors by giving the example as follows:

#### - The broken toys always repair by Grandfather (active voice)

#### - The broken toys is always repaired by Grandfather (students answer)

#### P = 385 X 100%

#### 769

#### = 50.06%

#### *Students difficulties in past participle (including omission, and addition)*

#### Students difficulties in past participle happened when they difficult to differentiate the use of irregular form and regular form. Regular form is made with adding ed, while in irregular form the students have to memorize the change of word. Here, the students also made an omission and addition error. Omission means that the students leave past tense - inflectional ed. As examples:

#### - The electric bulb was invent by Thomas Edison in1879

#### - A love song is always singed by her

#### The calculation of the errors is:

#### P = 177 x 100%

####  769

#### = 23.01 %

#### *Students difficulties in misordering*

#### From the analysis, misordering occurred when they lack of knowledge about the order in a passive voice or even a good structure of active voice. As a result the sentences were meaningless because of the position of the word was wrong.

#### For example:

#### Active voice

#### - Australia monitored Mount Soputan through satelitte imagery

####  S V2 O Prep Adv

#### Passive Voice

#### - Mount Soputan was monitored by Australia through satellite imagery

####  S aux. Be V3 by Agent Prep Adv

#### Students’ Answer

#### Imagery satelite through Soputan Mount was monitored by Australia

#### It seemed that the students tried to put the last word of the sentence in the beginning as a subject, they were failed to understand that the element that should be put in the beginning as a subject is an Object in the active sentence. Not to reverse the pattern from the behind into the beginning of the word.

#### The calculation of the error is:

#### P = 93 X 100%

#### 769

#### = 12.09%

#### *Students difficulties in passive order but active form*

#### This error means that the students have put the object in active form into subject in passive voice but they omitted an important element that should be available in passive voice such as be.

#### For example:

#### Active voice

#### My father washed my motorcycle

####  S V2 O

#### Become passive voice

#### My motorcycle was washed by my father

####  S Be V3 by Agent

#### Students’ answer:

#### My motorcycle washed by my father

####  S V3 by Agent

#### The sentence above have no to be, and the pattern is in active form even though the order that is object in the active form have preceded the verb. From the 37 errors were found in 14 students, so the calculation becomes:

#### P = 37 x 100%

#### 769

#### = 4.81 %

#### *Students difficulties in Active order but passive form*

#### The last error that I found and analyze was error in active order but passive form. This means that the students did not put the object in active voice into subject in passive voice whereas they have changed the verb into past participle.

#### For example in item number 39:

#### Mario advised his sister to study hard before exam (active voice)

####  S V2 O Adv

#### His sister was advised by Mario to study hard before exam (passive voice)

####  S Be V3 by O Adv

#### Mario was advised by his sister to study hard before exam (Students ‘answer)

#### As have been explained before, that the object have to put in the beginning as a subject, while many students did this kind of error by putting the subject in active voice as a subject in a passive sentence.

#### The calculation of this error is:

#### P = 20 X 100%

####  769

#### = 2.60 %

### Causes of Errors

#### Many factors that can caused the student do some errors. The students might make error because of the interference of their native language or the complexity of the target language which are known as Interlingual and Intralingual.

#### *Interlingual errors*

#### Interlingual interference errors are errors caused by students’ mother tongue interference. The interference was caused by transfer. Transfer is an error made by students because there is no difference between the two languages. Usually, they try to translate Indonesian into English. For example: The bank robber was caught the police last week.

#### The students leave out the word by but they still write the agent. If we try to understand the meaning in Indonesia without pay attention about the grammar in English, the sentences was acceptable. Because in Bahasa Indonesia for the first sentence we could say “Pencuri itu ditangkap polisi minggu lalu” and it has the same meaning with “Pencuri itu ditangkap oleh polisi minggu lalu”. There is no rule that the speaker has to use the word “oleh” in the passive form of Bahasa Indonesia. It is different with passive voice in English grammar, In which if we put the agent, it should be preceded by the word “by” except if the agent is not mentioned by the speaker because the agent does not really important. Thus, it is clear that the students interfered with their mother tongue.

#### *Intralingual errors*

#### Scovel (2001:51) defines that intralingual error is the confusion a language learner experiences when confronting patterns within the structure of a newly acquired language, irrespective of how the target language patterns might contrast with the learner’s mother tongue. Intralingual interference in this research happened because of overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, and false concept hypothesized.

#### Overgeneralization

#### Overgeneralization tends to occur to the L2 learner because of the transfer of their first language. Most of the errors that belong to overgeneralization are errors in addition, in which the students add some elements that should not exist in the sentences, for example:

#### 1. The car is imported by government from Cheko Everyday (correct passive)

#### 2. The car is importen by government from Cheko Everyday (students answer)

#### The verb above is included in regular verb, so that the students should only add inflectional –ed to the basic verb (import). However, the students add inflectional en just like in irregular form (break-broken) that made the verb above was meaningless. Therefore, the students made overgeneralization errors by adding inflectional –en in regular form.

#### Ignorance of the rule restriction

#### Ignorance of rule restriction means that the students do not master the rules of passive voice. The following sentences are the students’ answer that is used as examples.

#### 1. The monument is visit by hundreds of people every day.

#### 2. Two days ago the boy was broken the window.

#### In the first example, the student have succeded to put the object in active sentence into a subject in passive. However, the students failed to use the right past participle. They still using the present verb while in passive rule it should use past participle that is visited. Because it belongs to regular form so that the students have to add inflectional –ed in it.

#### In the second example, the active voice of that sentence is: two days ago the boy broke the window. It is obvious that the students do not shift the object in active sentence into a subject in passive sentence, while they have used the auxiliary be and past participle. Hence, this sentence cannot be categorized as a correct sentence. In addition, the students omitted the word “by”.

#### False concept hypothesized

#### Richard (1985:51) says false concept hypothesized is faulty comprehension of distinction in the foreign language. Shift the object as an object is a rule in passive, but the students misunderstand the rule with shifting from the very last word into the beginning of the word. They try to hypothesize that the passive can be made with shifting from the last word. For example: Imagery satelite through soputan mount was monitored by Australia.

#### In order to get further information about the students’ difficulties, I had conducted the interview with some students and the English teacher in the school target. From the interview, I got conclusion that the less frequent of exercises given by the teacher to the students and the situation when the teaching and learning process could be one of the factors that caused the difficulties for the students. The students told that they were explained well by the teacher, but the frequency of the exercises were too low. Therefore, the students did not really apply the theory that they have gotten. In this case, the teacher should give addition exercises to the students, not only theoretically.

#### Another problem based on the interview was the students were confused with the past participle or verb 3. As we know that passive voice is using past participle. In English, past participle can be in irregular form and regular form. Furthermore, some of the students omitted the participle form (V3) of the word or adding the verb 3 with inflectional -s or another addition that they though it was true. Even though the teacher has explained about that. Moreover, asked the students to memorize the irregular form.

## CONCLUSIONS

#### Based on the findings and discussion before, it can be concluded that the students did some errors or got some difficulties in changing active voice into passive voice in simple present tense and simple past tense. After the data were analyzed, it could be classified from the highest percentage of the error till the lowest error made by the students. The first error was error in determining the correct to be (385 errors or 50.06%). The second highest errors found was in past participle (177 errors or 23.01%. The third error was error in misordering (12.09%). Furthermore, there was also an error in determining pronoun (57 errors or 7.41%). Then errors in passive order but active form (37 errors or 4.81%), and the last was errors in active order but passive form (20 errors or 2.60%). The errors happened related to the cause of errors those are interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual errors happened because of the interference of a native language into a target language, while intralingual error happened because of the complexity of the target language which is contrast with their native language such is in tenses, pronoun, be, and etc. that is faced by the language learners.

####

#### Based on findings and discussion, I would like to offer some suggestion to the English teacher related with the students diffieculties in changing active voice into passive voice in simple present tense and simple past tense. The suggestion are:

#### The teachers should realize and pay attention to the students difficulties by looking at the item regarded as the highest into the lowest frequency of errors made by students.

#### The teachers should give more practices to the students besides of the theory and explanation so that the students can apply the theory that they have gotten. Furthermore, it can decrease the students’ lack of knowledge and understanding of the grammatical rules.

#### The teacher should develop their explanation about passive voice using the interesting method and media so that the students will not bored to keep up the learning process.

#### The teacher should emphasize the students to master the transformation of the object of the active voice into subject of the passive voice, the usage of the appropriate be on passive voice with the tense used in the active voice and with the number of the subject, whether the subject is singular and plural, the transformation of tenses in the active voice into passive voice, the usage of past participle (verb 3) whether the verb is regular and irregular.

**REFERENCES**

###### Azar, B.S. 1989. Understanding and Using English Grammar: Second Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.

###### Brown, H.D. 2000. Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, 4th ed. New York: Longman.

###### Corder, S.P. 1973. Introducing Applied Linguistic. America: Penguin Books.

###### Dullay, H, Marinna B, & Stephen K. 1982. Language Two. New York: Oxford University Press.

###### James, Carl. 1998. Errors in Language Learning and Use. New York: Longman.

###### Nzama, M.V. 2010. Error analysis: a study of errors Committed by isizulu speaking learners of English in selected schools. University of Zululand (Unpublished Final Project).

###### Richards, J.C & Richards W.S 1985. The Contex of Language Teaching. New York: Cambridge University Press.

###### Rivers, W.M. 1981. Teaching Foreign Language Skills. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Ltd.

###### Riyanto, S. 2007. A Handbook English Grammar. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar.

###### Somphong, M. 2013. An Analysis of Errors in Passive Sentence Structure by Thai EFL University Students. Osaka: The International Academic Forum.

###### Shridar, J.F. 1981. Contrastive Linguistics and Language Teacher: Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis. Pergamon Press.

######