

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS IN CHANGING ACTIVE VOICE TO PASSIVE VOICE: A CASE OF THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 1 GUBUG IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

Emy Nurussa'adah^{1*}, Siti Lestari², Maria Yosephin³

^{1,2,3)} Universitas PGRI Semarang

Address

email: emynurussaadahaja@gmail.com^{1*}, lestarist1912@gmail.com²,
mariayosephin@upgris.ac.id³

Received: June 23 2024

Revised: July 27 2024

Accepted: July 30 2024

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the types of error that are made by the students in changing active voice to passive in simple present tense and simple past tense, and the factors that cause the students make errors in changing active voice to passive voice in simple present tense and simple past tense. The method used in this study was qualitative method. The subject of this study was XI-1 class of SMA Negeri 1 Gubug. The researchers took 30 students as the sample. The data was collected through observation, test and questionnaire. The result of the error analysis showed that the students made errors into four types, those were omission (103 errors or 13.8%), addition (65 errors or 8.7%), misformation (510 errors or 68.4%) and misordering (68 errors or 9.1%). According to the Brown's theory and the finding of this study, the researchers found that the factors causing the students made errors were classified as intralingual transfer, interlingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies.

Keywords: *Error Analysis, Active Voice, Passive Voice, Types Of Error, Factors Causing Error*

Copyright © 2024 THE AUTHOR(S).
This article is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is regarded as the primary foreign language that is formally taught at the elementary, junior high, senior high, and university levels. Nevertheless, learning English has to take hard work because it is not easy. The pupils must acquire proficiency in the four language abilities, including hearing, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning English is not only mastering those four skills, but also has to master grammar. Thornburry (1999) states that grammar is a description of the rules that arrange how sentences formed and acceptable. English has some tenses which have different purpose. Tenses can tell us about the events or actions whether happen in the present, in the past or in the future.

Grammatical rules of English are not easy to be learned for EFL students. English grammar is a complicated case even for adult learners who are learning English. Some students think English grammar is difficult to understand, so they feel bored and do not even like learning English grammar.

Moreover, the grammatical rules of English make the students confused. Sometimes, they do not know when there are mistakes in their writing. It happens because of the lack of their understanding about English grammar. They are not conscious of their mistakes and cannot correct the mistakes by themselves. Those kinds of mistakes are called as an error. Dulay et.,al (1982:138) state that errors are parts of learners' speech or writing which deviate from the rules of language performance. There are many errors and mistakes in learning English tenses, but it is normal and unavoidable to make errors and mistakes. Norrish (1983) also agrees that it's natural for students to make errors since they are human, and even many native speakers make mistakes in speaking, but they are unaware of these problems until they hear recording of themselves. Nonetheless, if the students' errors are ignored, it can be fatal because they will make the same errors in the future.

English grammar has many matters to be discussed. One of them is the passive voice. According to Altenberg and Vago (2010:238), passive voice refers to sentences where the subject is not placed before the verb. The fundamental elements of the English passive voice consist of a variant of the auxiliary verb "be" and the past participle of the primary verb, which denotes an action. In this matter, the students will find many difficulties when they learn passive voice. They will be confused about the tenses. Each tense has a different form in the passive voice. The verb that will be used in the passive form has to be adjusted to the past participle form. In this case, the students who do not understand about the past participle will make an error because there are regular verb and irregular verb. For the regular verb, of course, it is easy to understand because we only need to add "ed" in the end of the main verb, but it is different with the irregular verb. Therefore, the English teacher should give more attention in teaching passive voice because passive voice is very common to be used in scientific writing or other kinds of statements where the writer is more interested to the actions or the processes in things that happen.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the errors made by students when converting sentences from active voice to passive voice. The passive voice can be used in any tense, but for this research, the writer will only use the simple present tense and simple past tense. The additional aims of this study are to identify the specific errors produced by students when converting active speech to passive voice, as well as to determine the elements that contribute to these errors.

Literature Review

The researchers explain the earlier research done by another researcher in a literature review. It is divided into a review on analysis students' errors, active voice to passive voice, the types of error and the factors causing students' errors.

The first one was examined by Hadi (2021). He investigated the common error made by students in using passive voice and found out what factors which cause the students make errors. The findings of the study can be concluded that the common error was misformation error which consists of 152 errors or 66,3% and the causes of those errors are intralingual transfer, interlingual transfer, context of learning and communicative strategies.

The second one conducted by Kamayana (2021). This study was purposed to identify the types and percentage of grammatical errors in using passive voice. The study revealed that the students made errors in utilizing passive voice across all sorts of surface strategy taxonomies. The most prevalent grammatical errors in passive usage are of the "Omission" category. The omission errors include the misuse of prepositions, the incorrect use of the verb "be," the improper use of conjunctions, and the incorrect use of past participles. It suggests that the kids still struggle with utilizing the passive voice.

The third one was done by Bariroh et.,al (2022). This study was aimed to identifying the types of error in changing active voice to passive voice and difficulties that are faced by the students. The findings revealed that pupils made errors in four distinct categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The pupils faced challenges in utilizing pronouns, employing the auxiliary verb "be," utilizing past participles, misordering elements, and forming passive voice.

Active voice is used to make a statement about an action. Nevertheless, the passive voice is often found in formal written such as magazines, newspaper, and articles. The use of active voice is justified by the fact that the object holds more significant information than the subject (Kusnadi, 2011:284). Azar (2002) states that in the passive form, the subject of an active verb is transformed into

the object of the passive verb. It should be noted that in a passive sentence, the subject of an active verb is placed after the word "by". The term used to refer to the noun that comes after "by" is "agent". Furthermore, the passive voice can only be formed with transitive verbs.

The Structure of Active Voice and Passive Voice

Tenses	Structure	
	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Simple Present	S + V1 (s/es) + O	S + to be (is, am, are) + V3
Simple Past	S + V2 + O	S + to be (was, were) + V3

Keshavarz (2012: 60) posits that errors are characterized as systematic, rule-governed occurrences that arise due to a learner's poor understanding of the rules of the target language. Acquiring a language undoubtedly involves acquiring the regulations that are present within that particular language. Every language in this world has its own rules, so a learner can get confused and even do not know the rules. In consequence, a learner is possible to make an error.

Dulay et al. (1982) categorizes errors into four forms according to the surface approach taxonomy: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Furthermore, according to Brown (1980), the elements responsible for students' errors can be categorized as interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication techniques.

According to Crystal (1987:112), error analysis is a technique using any of the rules and procedures in linguistics to identify, to categorize, and systematically to clarify the unacceptable forms resulting from someone learning a foreign language. Richards et.,al (1992) state that the purpose of error analysis in language teaching is to gather data from students' errors that may be used to inform instruction or the creation of teaching materials.

Ellis (1994) gave us the steps for mistake analysis. An example of student language is gathered, mistakes are found, mistakes are described, mistakes are explained, and mistakes are judged.

Methods

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Gubug with the respondent of the eleventh-grade students. The researchers applied qualitative research as the research design. The subject in this study was XI-1 class which consists of 30 students.

The researchers employed observation, testing, and questionnaires as the instruments for data collection in this study. In addition, in order to get the data, the researchers conducted observations as a preliminary step. It was employed to ascertain the methodology of teaching and learning, the instructional materials, and the pedagogical tools utilized by the teacher in the classroom. Next, the pupils completed the test. The test comprises 25 questions that specifically address the passive voice in the simple present tense and simple past tense. Furthermore, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the pupils. The questionnaire comprises a total of nine questions.

Upon gathering the data, the researchers proceeded to examine it. Initially, the researchers ascertain the faults. In this step, the acquired data will be examined to identify any inaccuracies by emphasizing them. The data analysis is conducted with maximum objectivity. Furthermore, the researchers categorize the inaccuracies. The identified errors will be categorized into four groups according to the surface strategy taxonomy: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Furthermore, the researchers perform calculations to determine the faults. Data calculation is performed

to determine the frequency of each error. The writer will employ the formula derived by Sudjiono (2009) to compute the frequency of each inaccuracy. This technique involves performing a descriptive analysis by calculating a percentage based on the available information and dividing it by the total number of cases:

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

P = Number of percentage

F = Frequency of errors

N = Total of errors

Result and Discussion

The data of this study was students' errors in changing active voice to passive voice of simple present tense and simple past tense. The researchers had classified and counted the errors into four types based on the surface strategy taxonomy from Dulay et.,al (1982). The following is the table of frequency and percentage of students' error types.

The Frequency and Percentage of Students' Error Types

No	Types of error	Frequency of incorrect answer	Percentage of students' errors
1	Omission	103	$\frac{103}{746} \times 100\% = 13.8\%$
2	Addition	65	$\frac{65}{746} \times 100\% = 8.7\%$
3	Misformation	510	$\frac{510}{746} \times 100\% = 68.4\%$
4	Misordering	68	$\frac{68}{746} \times 100\% = 9.1\%$
Total		746	100%

Furthermore, the types of error that were made by the students are discussed as follow.

1. Omission

Omission refers to the nonexistence of an element that is necessary for a properly constructed statement (Dulay et.,al, 1982). There was a total of 103 mistakes of omission discovered. Upon investigation, the researcher identified many forms of omission. The categories include the omission of the articles "a" and "the", the omission of the verb "be", the omission of a verb, and the deletion of the preposition "by".

2. Addition

The existence of an item that should not be included in a well-formed statement indicates addition faults (Dulay et al., 1982). Upon scrutinizing the pupils' answer sheets, the researcher discovered several instances of addition errors. The cumulative error of addition amounts to 65 errors. When the students converted the active voice to passive, they committed errors such as including unneeded words in the phrase. Three types of addition were discovered. Those markers consist of both regularization and simple addition.

3. Misformation

Dulay et al. (1982) assert that misformation mistakes manifest through the utilization of an incorrect form of the morpheme or structure. According to the table provided, the overall error

of misinformation is the most significant. A total of 510 mistakes were detected, accounting for 68.4% of the total. Upon scrutinizing the students' answer sheet, the researcher identified three distinct categories of misinformation errors. These are errors in the usage of the verb "be", errors in pronoun usage, and errors in verb usage.

4. Misordering

Misordering mistakes, as defined by Dulay et al. (1982), refer to the improper positioning of a morpheme or a collection of morphemes within a phrase. According to the provided chart, the cumulative error resulting from misordering amounts to 68. Upon examining the students' answer sheets, the researcher discovered that the students placed adverbs at the beginning of sentences due to their inability to differentiate between adverbs and objects within the phrase.

After collecting and analyzing all data, the researchers could summarize the factors that cause the students' errors in changing active voice to passive voice. Those are as follow.

- 1) The first factor is the method used by the teacher is not appropriate. The students had difficulty in understanding the materials explained by the teacher. The teacher should choose the suitable method based on the materials and the students' condition. Otherwise, it would harm the students' comprehension. As a result, the students made errors.
- 2) The second factor is no references and worksheets related to passive voice. The students only rely on their teacher's explanation about passive voice. It will make the students only remembering without really understanding about the material. The students should do more exercises by using references and worksheets. However, if they do not have references and worksheets, it will make the students facing difficulty in learning. This case could be a factor causing students made errors.
- 3) The third factor is the impact of one's native language. According to the results, the majority of students were influenced by their native language when transitioning from active voice to passive voice. The pupils were attempting to transfer the structure of passive voice from Bahasa to English. However, the grammatical structures in Bahasa and English differ. For example:

The song entitled "Right Here Waiting" was sung her.

According to the example above, the student forgot the word "by". If we try to understand the meaning in Bahasa without using the rule in English, the sentence can be received. In Bahasa, we can say *Lagu berjudul "Right Here Waiting" dinyanyikan dia*. It does not have different meaning as *Lagu berjudul "Right Here Waiting" dinyanyikan oleh dia*. In the passive form of Bahasa, there is no rule that the speakers must use the word "oleh". It is not the same in passive form in English. If we put an agent, we must put the word "by" first besides if the agent is not mentioned. Therefore, it is obviously that the students are influenced by their first language.

- 4) The fourth factor is difficulty in using "be". In changing active voice to passive voice, the students should know the existence of "be" which is used after they put the new subject. Most of the students used incorrect "be" in their answers. For example:

The apple and the orange was eaten by Ronaldo.

According to the example above, the sentence could be understood, but it could not be accepted grammatically. The students did not be aware that the subject is plural. The students accidentally used "was" rather than "were". The sentence should be "*The apple and the orange were eaten by Ronaldo*".

- 5) The fifth factor is the challenge of utilizing verbs. If the pupils are unfamiliar with irregular and regular forms, they may likely make mistakes when converting active voice to passive voice. The regular form of a verb is formed by adding the suffix -ed. Meanwhile, the students should commit to memory the irregular form and the changes in word structure. The study discovered that the pupils had challenges in utilizing verbs. The children were observed to have made errors of omission and addition. Omission means the students did not put the -d/-ed suffix to form past participle while addition means the students added an unnecessary element. For example:

Korean dramas are watch by many people. (Omission)

Her nails are cutted by me every Friday. (Addition)

The two sentences above cannot be accepted grammatically. The first sentence should be “*Korean dramas are watched by many people*”. The second sentence should be “*Her nails are cut by me every Friday*”.

- 6) The sixth factor is difficulty in using pronoun. The researchers found that some students did not know the change of pronoun from subject to be object pronoun. The students wrote the subject pronoun as the object pronoun. For example:

Our library is visited by they every Tuesday.

According to the example above, the sentence is wrong in the case of wrong form of object pronoun. “*They*” is used if its position as a subject. If “*they*” is used as an object pronoun, it should be changed to be “*them*”. The correct sentence should be “*Our library is visited by them every Tuesday*”.

- 7) The seventh factor is classroom’s atmosphere. The classroom’s atmosphere did not support the learning process. This factor caused the students cannot focus and pay attention to the teacher’s explanation effectively. Therefore, the students cannot learn and understand the material. This case certainly could affect the students’ focus in learning passive voice.

Conclusion

After analyzing the types of error, the dominant type of error, and the factors causing errors in changing active voice to passive voice made by the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Gubug, the researchers made the conclusion as follows:

1. It is found 4 types of error made by the students in changing active voice to passive voice. Firstly, omission error got 103 errors (13.8%). Secondly, addition error got 65 errors (8.7%). Thirdly, misformation error got 510 errors (68.4%). Fourthly, misordering error got 68 errors (9.1%).
2. The dominant type of error made by the students in changing active voice to passive voice is misformation error with the percentage of 68.4%. Then, there are 3 kinds of misformation error. The first is the highest error, misformation of using “be”. The total error is 328 errors (64.3%). The second is misformation error of using verb (V3). The total error is 151 errors (29.6%). The third is the lowest error, misformation of pronoun. The total error is 31 errors (6.1%).
3. The factors causing errors found in this study were classified as interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies. The factor that most influenced the students made errors is the influence of mother tongue with the percentage of 83.3%.

References

- Altenberg, Evelyn P; Vago, R. M. (2010). *English Grammar: Understanding the Basics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Azar, B. S. (2002). *Understanding and Using English Grammar (3rd ed)*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586472>
- Bariroh, K., Yosephin, M., & Lestari, S. (2022). An Analysis Of Students ’ Error In Changing Active Voice To Passive Voice : A Case Of The Eleventh Grade Students Of Ma Miftahul Huda Pati In Academic Year 2021 / 2022. *E-Link Journal*, 2(1), 387–394.
- Brown, H. D. (1980). *Principles of Language Teaching and Learning*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Crystal. (1987). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Stephen, K. (1982). *EBOOK_Language_Two_by_Heidi_Dulay_Marin.pdf* (p. 313).
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hadi, I. (2021). An error analysis of active and passive voice towards english text of University Students in South Jakarta Info. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* <https://Jurnal.Unibrah.Ac.Id/Index.Php/JIWP>, 7(2), 9–16.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4657081>

- Keshavarz, M. H. (2012). *Contrastive Analysis & Error Analysis (New Edition)*. 174.
- Kusnadi, M. (2011). *Excellent English Grammar*. Surabaya: Bintang Usaha Jaya.
- Nelson, G. (2001). *Essential English Grammar*. London: Routledge.
- Norrish, J. (1983). *Language learners and their errors*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Nyoman, I. G., & Kamayana, P. (2021). *ERRORS ANALYSIS IN PASSIVE VOICE AT UNDHIRA STUDENTS ' THESES AGREED FOR FOLLOWING THE FINAL COMPREHENSIVE TEST. 4*, 115–120.
- Richards, J. C; Platt, J; Platt, H. (1992). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. London: Longman.
- Thornbury, S. (2003). *How To Teach Grammar*, pearson Education Limited.
<https://jonturnerhct.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/how-to-teach-grammar-scott-thornbury.pdf>