

An analysis of passive voice mastery of eleventh graders of SMA Negeri 5 Purwokerto

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ABSTRACT

Mastering passive voice is an essential aspect of English grammar. Passive voice is frequently used in journals, newspapers, and scientific writing. Therefore, students should feel comfortable creating passive voice sentences, even though errors are common during language learning activities. This study aimed to measure and analyze students' mastery in passive voice and to find out their errors. The data collection method utilized for this quantitative research was testing techniques. The research subjects were 30 eleventh-grade students from SMA Negeri 5 Purwokerto. The writer discovered that the students had achieved a perfect level of mastery in passive voice, while the most common error observed was misinformation

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

There are a lot of cases in grammar that have to be mastered, and one of them is the passive voice. The passive voice itself is used in written and spoken forms, which is often useful in scientific writing or any written forms that the writer attached to the things that occur. Passive voice also helps authors to emphasize the most important people or events in a sentence by putting them first. Moreover, using passive voice in the right way will help to construct the clarification of the subject from the sentence to be clear in scientific writing. Those can also help to avoid the usage of friendly personal pronouns. As to the form, Nelson et al. (2002) state that the passive voice is formed by combining the auxiliary be with a past participle verb form. In addition, Altenberg and Vago (2010) also state that in passive voice, the subject or the doer is not placed at the beginning of the sentence or before the verb. It can be seen that the past participle verb is the one that shows the action in its sentence.

Based on Sitorus et al. (2015), students usually do not completely comprehend the forms of passive voice. That is why they should not be comfortable making errors since it is usually not too much different. The basic one that needs to be mastered by students are auxiliaries, past participle, and tenses. Additionally, errors commonly occur during language learning activities. Given the diverse nature of these errors, researchers typically categorize them into two types: performance and competence. Performance errors stem from the fluctuating emotional states of learners, such as fatigue and haste, while competence errors are recognized as resulting from the manifestation of imperfect learning.

1.2. Literature Review

a. Error Analysis

According to Hammer (2005), making errors is a common occurrence as it is a natural response during the learning process. Furthermore, as explained by Brown (2000), errors are an essential aspect of the learning process, encompassing the introduction and acquisition of new knowledge. With this in mind, errors can naturally arise, eventually leading to a better understanding due to input from others and transforming initial errors into outcomes that align with rules and provide correct answers.

Errors are also known as an inherent and normal part of the learning process as they serve as evidence of students' progress, even though errors can be perceived as imperfections in students' spoken or written work (Dulay, 1982). According to Dulay's theory, committing errors is a natural aspect of students' written or written expressions. Moreover, due to the emphasis on the normal term, language learning cannot be separated from errors, and we should not blame students who make efforts to understand language learning with their understanding.

However, the origins of students' errors reveal variability across different cases. As posited by Sermsook et al. (2017), four causative factors for students' writing errors are identified, including interlanguage, intralanguage, deficiencies in grammatical knowledge and English vocabulary, as well as the precision of students' responses. Tauchid and Fatoni (2019) further expound that, among all the cited reasons for errors, a limitation in students' understanding of grammar and vocabulary in the target language is believed as the most critical. When students lack comprehension of the grammar of the target language, they instinctively revert to their first language (L1), resulting in writing errors.

Errors often distinguished by researchers into two types: competence errors and performance errors. Dulay et al. (1982) have also added to this categorization by breaking errors down into four types: addition, omission, misinformation, and misordering. These types of errors are commonly made by second language learners. By identifying and analyzing them, we can better understand how to improve language acquisition.

In this research, the first error analysis approach that being outlined comprises many systematic processes that are often used in talks on error analysis, particularly about classroom scenarios. Gass and Seinker (2008) outline the procedures for doing error analysis as follows: (1) data collection may be achieved using written or spoken methods, (2) identifying errors, such as incorrect verb use due to a lack of understanding of the context, and inadequacies in sentence structure resulting from systemic rules, (3) categorizing it based on their kind, (4) error quantification, including determining the frequency of each identified error, (5) examining the sources of errors, and (6) discussing errors and making improvements based on their kind and frequency, while considering the necessity for instructional interventions.

In addition, Saville and Troike (2012) express their viewpoint on error analysis, which encompasses the following stages: (1) a compilation of learner language samples is created, (2) error detection, which means the first stage involves detecting elements in the learner's language sample that deviate from the desired second language in any manner, (3) an explanation of the errors where it categorized according to language proficiency level, broader linguistic classifications, or specific linguistic elements to facilitate analysis, (4) a clarification of the error, providing a rationale for the occurrence of an error is a crucial measure in comprehending the fundamental mechanisms involved, and (5) error assessment that involves evaluating the impact of the error on the intended recipients. Additionally, throughout the error analysis process, students' words are compared with the ones deemed "correct" in the target language that aligns with them.

b. Passive Voice Mastery

According to El-Sakran and Nada (2014), the meaning of a sentence can be derived from the activity and passive voice of a sentence. Passive voice is often used to delete the subjects (or agents) when it is not necessary as a wrongdoer. It is supported by Yannuar et al. (2014) that states the process in passive voice is more important than the wrongdoer.

Nursehag (2020) states that passive voice is used to express curiosity about an object or a person's behavior. Sartika (2017) also supports the definition of passive voice, which is when an object that is placed at the end of the sentence is moved to the beginning of the sentence, therefore making the active voice passive.

According to Choomthong (2011), as one of the grammatical structures, passive voice has a noun phrase that acts as the subject of a clause, phrase, and or verb that is being influenced by or is acted upon by a verb. As a subject, the noun phrase usually becomes a part of the benefit recipients of the activity instead of the wrongdoer and could be ignored (Choomthong 2011).

Amadi (2018) mentioned that passive voice will be needed if: (1) the sentence does not need to bring up the wrongdoer, (2) the context is already approved, insignificant, and unclear, the mention of the wrongdoer is not needed, (3) the wrongdoer is a non-living thing, and (4) the new information is indicated from the connection between the phrases. Aside from that, it is implied that passive has a special function that may be used to underline certain information by doing a highlight in the beginning.

With the theories being explained above, the mastery of passive voice will help the learners to emphasize the relevant information at the beginning of the sentence. Since it indicates the unnecessary of what, when, and who caused the situation to have occurred or the attention is on the activity rather than the wrongdoer who did the action. Besides that, it also helps to produce and understand the content of formal writing such as scientific papers, journals, and formal information to read such as newspapers.

1.3. Review of Related Studies

Related study based on error analysis and passive voice mastery can be seen from Batubara and Mahardhika (2020). The student population exhibited challenges in understanding passive sentence structures and encountered difficulties when transforming active into passive sentences. This difficulty was particularly prominent in past continuous tenses, followed by future continuous tenses, past future perfect tenses, past perfect continuous tenses, past perfect tenses, and to infinitive. Additionally, the teaching approach for passive voice centered on a combination of student-centered and teacher-centered learning methods, with a particular emphasis on the continuous tense of passive voice. Students heavily depend on technologies such as computerized dictionaries during teaching and evaluation, which hinders their understanding of English structure. The results indicate different degrees of competency among students, with some demonstrating adequate skills, while others need further practice and learning in the area of passive voice.

Another relevant study being published by Sartika (2017) can be seen from a significant number of individuals still encounter difficulties in transitioning from the active to passive voice. One of the observed challenges in mastering involves determining the correct verb, with the selection of an appropriate formula and the transformation of the subject being the tasks presenting the lowest proficiency among students. This struggle is particularly pronounced during the transformation of interrogative sentences from the active to passive form. The conclusion came from the question of the research, the researcher wants the students to change the voice of active sentence into the passive voice since the relevant studies helped to avoid the confusion. Because of that, the researcher decides to do research about the students' mastery on passive voice.

1.4. Research Question

1. What is the students' mastery in passive voice?
2. What kind of errors do students make in passive voice?

2. Method

The research utilized a quantitative design with a statistical approach for data collection and analysis. While making a hypothesis and figuring out the research technique as the first step in quantitative, the researcher would also take a control of the outcome factors that might be affecting the data. However, the quantitative research would take a moment to interact with the participants since they collect the data in a written form. Descriptive method was employed to analyze naturally occurring events. To select the sample population, the researcher chose 30 eleventh-grade students from SMA Negeri 5 Purwokerto during the 2022/2023 academic year using simple random sampling

with equal probability. Data was collected during a 2-hour English class where the writer covered the topic of passive voice and allowed students to ask questions. Once all inquiries were addressed, the researcher administered a two-part test consisting of 30 multiple-choice and essay questions. In addition to the research instrument being developed, the researcher is also utilizing a blueprint to track the number of research instruments that are being categorized by their respective tenses. For the data analysis technique, this research utilized the scoring table from Elmaida's (2020) journal to assess and analyze students' proficiency in the passive voice. Errors identified were quantified using the percentage calculation method by Sudjana (2001).

Table 1. The degree of ability

The Degree of Ability	Range	Total Students
Very Good	88-100	...
Good	73-87	...
Enough	63-72	...
Low	53-62	...
Very Low	0-52	...

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Fig. 1. Percentage of errors

3. Findings and Discussion

As an initial step, the researcher collected 30 answer sheets from students and proceeded to analyze the passive voice. Using the table of the degree of ability, the researcher categorized the number of students who filled positions with each ability.

3.1. Measure and Analyze Students' Mastery in Passive Voice

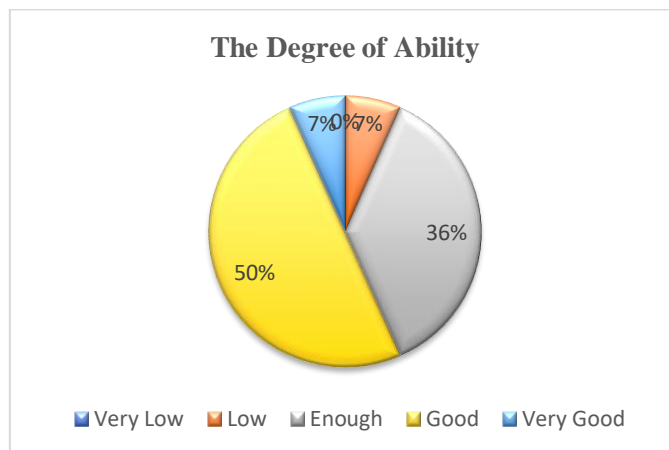


Fig. 2. Pie chart of the degree of ability

A discussion also can be drawn from the pie chart, which displays the percentage of students sorted by their degree of ability. The level of students' mastery can be determined using a pie chart that applies the mean formula to count the points in the following table. Using a pie chart, the mean formula used to count point out the level of students' mastery with the table of calculation of students' degree of ability. Based on the table, the students showed excellent mastery despite some errors found during the essay corrections. We followed Dulay's classification of errors, which includes four types: addition, omission, misinformation, and misordering. We discovered 230 errors, with misinformation being the most common error type. Specifically, there were 110 misinformation errors, accounting for almost half of all errors at 47.82%. Misordering was the second most frequent error type, with 77 errors (34.47%), followed by omission with 35 errors (15.21%). Addition errors had the lowest frequency, with only eight errors, making up 3.5% of all errors.

Table 2. The calculation of students' degree of ability

The Degree of Ability	Range	f_i	x_i	$f_i x_i$
Very Good	88-100	2	94	188
Good	73-87	15	80	1,200
Enough	63-72	11	67.5	742.5
Low	53-62	2	57.5	115
Very Low	0-52	0	26	0
$\sum f_i$		30	$\sum f_i x_i$	2,245.5

Table 3. The calculation of mean value

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{x} &= \frac{\sum f_i x_i}{\sum f_i} \\ \bar{x} &= \frac{2,245.5}{30} \\ \bar{x} &= 74.85\end{aligned}$$

3.2. Identify Errors from Students' Passive Voice

a. Addition

Table 4. The Errors of Addition

Students' Code	Number of the Students' Answer	Students' Writing	Correction
S19	9	Are <u>chopsticks being used</u> by Koreans?	Are <u>chopsticks used</u> by Koreans?
S6	3	The roofs of several houses were <u>blown off</u> by the strong wind.	The roofs of several houses were <u>blown off</u> by the strong wind.
S5	3	The roofs of several houses <u>were been blown off</u> by the strong wind.	The roofs of several houses <u>were blown off</u> by the strong wind.

In Sentence 1, “being” was written in, while to be is already written to begin the yes/no question. While in sentence 2 and sentence 3, “blown off” and “been” were added, while the verb should have written as, “blown off” and the other one should not be existed since it was talking about simple past.

b. Omission

Table 5. The Errors of Omission

Students' Code	Number of the Students' Answer	Students' Writing	Correction
S6	10	The final of the world cup <u>was</u> <u>gushed</u> by the class.	The final of the world cup <u>was being gushed</u> by the class.
S14	8	The second-hand book had not been <u>written</u> by him.	The second-hand book had not been <u>written</u> by him.
S7	7	A coffee <u>has been</u> by someone.	A coffee <u>has been made</u> by someone.

In the first sentence, some students omitted “being” while it should have been added as a part of past progressive’s to be. The second one was missing the letter “t” to completely known as the verb 3 of write. While the third sentence looks indifferent with the second sentence, it is missing the verb 3 on it.

c. Misinformation

Table 6. The Errors of Misinformation

Students' Code	Number of the Students' Answer	Students' Writing	Correction
S26	5	What was being <u>sang</u> by TXT and Salem Ilese?	What was being <u>sung</u> by TXT and Salem Ilese?
S27	1	Where <u>to be</u> he taken to?	Where <u>was</u> he taken to?
S10	10	The final of the world cup <u>wes</u> gushed by the class.	The final of the world cup <u>was</u> being gushed by the class.

The first and third sentences, indicate the writers' use of "verb" and "to be" based on their spoken language. However, in the second sentence, "to be" was selected as the correct answer "was" is more appropriate to fulfill the passive voice of "wh-question".

d. Misordering

Table 7. The Errors of Misordering

Students' Code	Number of the Students' Answer	Students' Writing	Correction
S21	9	<u>Chopsticks are</u> used by Koreans?	<u>Are chopsticks</u> used by Koreans?
S4	3	<u>Several houses blew off the roofs</u> by the strong wind.	<u>The roofs of several houses were blown off</u> by the strong wind.

It has been observed that in order to form a question from the sentence in number one, it should begin with "to be" followed by the subject of the sentence. Whereas in the second sentence appeared to have an incorrect order of subject and verb, causing students to miss others element too.

4. Conclusion

Passive voice mastery is crucial for effective communication, especially in academic and scientific writing, where clarity and objectivity are essential. However, students often struggle with its construction, especially in the use of auxiliaries, past participles, and use the correct tense structures. Error analysis reveals common patterns, including addition, omission, misinformation, and misordering, which stem from both performance-related factors and gaps in grammatical competence. Prior research highlights persistent difficulties in transitioning from active to passive voice, underscoring the need for more effective instructional approaches. The approach used in this research is quantitative, evaluated from the students' mastery of passive voice and systematically categorized their errors. While findings indicate a generally strong grasp of passive voice, misinformation errors were the most frequent because it can be seen there were 110 misinformation errors, with the percentage of 47.82 means almost half of all errors. These results emphasize the need for targeted teaching methods to enhance students' understanding and application of passive voice, ultimately strengthening their overall language proficiency and academic writing skills

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