



**An Error Analysis of Active and Passive Voice Towards English Text of University Students in South Jakarta**

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**Abstract:**

*This research is aimed at analyzing university students' errors in using Passive Voice. Specifically, it is aimed for obtaining and identifying the common error in using passive voice and finding out what factors which trigger the students make such errors. The data sources of this research were 38 students of fifth semester university students of in South Jakarta which were taken by random sampling. The researcher used the descriptive analysis method in this research to describe students' errors and analyzed the data by using formula:  $P = \frac{ni}{\sum n} \times 100\%$  The data were taken from the test. The findings showed that there are 229 errors made by students. The common error made by students in using Passive Voice was Misformation, which consists of 152 errors or 66.3%. According to Brown's theory, it was interpreted that, intralingual transfer, interlingual transfer, context of learning and communicative strategies are causes of those errors.*

**Keyword:** An Analysis, Passive Voice

**INTRODUCTION**

Language becomes an important part of human life. Human is a social creatures, so they need a language to communicate each other. As stated in Pinker's book *The Language Instinct* (1995), "Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed

without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in every individual, is distinct from more general abilities to process information or behave intellegently". Based on Pinker's statement above, the researcher concludes that every baby in the world are born with their language skill. This skill will develop unconsciously. Then, the language skill is used to convey the knowledge from their

environment and to be well-behaved in front of their society.

Previous studies have shown that English as a Foreign Language teaching in Indonesian has encountered some significant problems, such as low teachers' competence, low students' competence and motivation among students (Lengkenawati, 2005:79; Luciana, 2006:19; Soepriyatna, 2012:38). As a result, students find many serious challenges and difficulties in learning English although the level of learning is based on their ability. Since English is regarded as one of important foreign languages in Indonesia, so it should be taught and applied to students at the school. In connection with that, students face some problems in learning English. Those problems are the difficulties in understanding grammar or structure and vocabulary, pronunciation, reading skill, and listening skill.

Those skills are required in order to create a good sentence, students should understand grammar or structure in English. They also need to learn how to speak clearly by pronouncing each word correctly. Since the way of English written words are different from the way of words are pronounced. Moreover, students are not only demanded to be able to read but also to comprehend the texts. In listening skill, they must understand what a native speaker says about and catch the messages as well.

In the other hand, learning English, especially for senior high school students is expected the learners to be able to improve four English skills such as, reading, listening, speaking and writing. Based on the latest curriculum in Indonesia, learners must be able to possess some competences like writing, creating and delivering idea/opinion, and even giving feed back toward a problem using English. Those competences can only be possessed if the learners understand and master the elements of language such as,

vocabulary, grammar or structure and pronunciation according to the topic is taught in the class. Based on the whole essential skills in English (reading, listening, speaking and writing) and the elements of language (vocabulary, grammar or structure and pronunciation) above, it can be concluded that learning grammar, especially the passive voice which has not been mastered by the students. Students have not been able to make a passive voice sentence correctly although in a very simple way.

In accordance with that, the passive voice is used to show interest in the person or object that experiences an action rather than the person or object that performs the action. In other words, the most important thing or person becomes the subject of the sentence. The passive forms are made up of the appropriate form of the verb "be" + past participle verbs (V3). Passive voice is quite difficult to be learned by the students because they get confused to exchange between Subject (S) and Object (O) from active voice to passive voice or vice versa. Moreover, students are still lack of knowledge about some English verbs such as, verb1, verb2, and verb3 (past participle). They also have some difficulties in memorizing verb "be" like, present (am, is, are) or past (was, were), etc.

Students tend to do one of the common mistakes by omitting verb "be" before placing the Verb3 (past participle). In fact, the past participle has an important function or role to form a correct passive sentence. Here are some common mistakes made by the students in making passive voice using simple present tense; *the banana eats by my brother, the mouse kills by my father, my homework signs by my mother*. Based on those examples, each sentence is supposed to have the verb "be" present (am, is, are) and change the verbs into the verb3 (past participle) in order to make a correct passive sentence. It is supposed to be; *the banana is eaten by my*

*brother, the mouse is killed by my father, my homework is signed by my mother.*

For those reasons, the researcher is interested in analysing the errors on passive voice in English texts. Especially for the upper grade students, the difficulty level of learning English is more complicated. Passive voice as one of the topics in learning English is mostly regarded difficult for the students. Since learning passive voice is quite difficult for students, the researcher would like to know what kind of errors which mostly occur in using passive voice. One more thing that the researcher would like to know is also what factors which trigger students in making some errors the most when using passive voice.

In accordance with that, the researcher will do the research toward the fifth semester students in one of university in South Jakarta. By doing this, the researcher wishes that teachers can be more conscientious to help students to reduce the errors when learning about passive voice. Also for students, they can more understand in learning passive voice.

Learners cannot avoid making some errors. When they learn some skills or elements in the target language, especially in speaking or writing, they still face some obstacles. Error is a reasonable thing which usually occurs when the students learn about something new, especially in learning language. It is a natural part of learning process. Douglas Brown (2000: 217) also defines error as “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of the native speaker, reflects the competence of the learner”. In other words, error is an incorrect understanding of ability made by the native speaker because he/she lacks of knowledge. There are many sources of errors, According to Brown (2000:223), there are four sources of errors such as : interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies. Another expert which also discuss about sources of

error is Norrish (1983) states sources of error divided into three types, they are carelessness, First language interference and translation. Carelessness is often closely related to lack of motivation. Many teacher will admit that it is not always the students' fault, if he loses interest, perhaps the materials and/or style of presentation do not suit him. Norrish stated that learning a language (a mother tongue or a foreign language) is a matter of habit information. When someone tries to learn new habits, the old ones will interfere with new ones. This cause of error is called first language interferences. Thus, error is a failure of competence which can be made by the learners unconsciously and even frequently. This error is not self-correctable because of their competence is deficient. Since they are lack of the competence to learn the target language that is why the leaners tend to make some errors without noticing how to do the skills correctly. If the learners do not realize that in making some errors repeatedly can cause them not to master the target language. So, in this case, the teacher's role is so important to help the learners decrease making some errors. In addition, it is better if the teacher can give some good inputs for the learners about how to overcome this problem.

Translation is one of the causes of error. It happens because the students translate their first language into the target language word by word. Dulay (1982) divides errors into four categories, they are omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Omission, that is sentences where an element is omitted, actually it should be presented. For example : She beautiful. There is something missing from the sentence. There must be a linking verb *is* before the word *beautiful*. Addition, it is a phenomenon in which a certain aspect of language rules is added into correct sentence, in order words some elements are presented which should not be

presented. For example: You brings many books. The letter *s* in the verb *bring* is not needed, because the subject is *you*, it does not need the addition *s*. Misformation is the error of using one grammatical form in the place of another grammatical form. Misordering. It is a sentence which its order is incorrect. The sentence can be right in presented elements, but wrongly sequenced. For example : I need a scissors sharp to cut the paper. Adjectives are always put before nouns, so it should be *a sharp scissors*. Richards (1973) defines that error analysis is the study of errors which are made by the second and foreign language learners. Another expert who discuss the error analysis is Brown (2004 : 218) “error analysis is the study of students’ error which can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learners.” The purpose is to give the students a feedback, so they realize which is correct, and then they can make a remedy. There are five stages of error analysis, according to Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005:57) there are the collection of a sample, identification or error, classification of error, and error evaluation.

Sembling (2011: 6) as cited from Corder says that “error analysis is study analysis of the errors made by the second of foreign language learners to predict the errors or the difficulties in learning foreign language”. On the other hand, error analysis is a theory to find, figure out, and identify some mistakes or errors made by the learners when learning the target language. It is so important to do because the learners have to know the correct form, structure, vocabulary and the use of the target language. In order to not make the learners repeat the same errors or mistakes, so the role of teachers are really necessary to help their students overcome this problem. It is why an error analysis needs to be developed more.

In addition, according to Gass and Selinker (2001: 79) also state about error analysis, that is “it is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make”. In other words, error analysis only focuses on the structure of the written or oral skill of the target language learners. So it is not related to the reading or listening skill. The learners must focus more of the way they write about something in English or speak in English. When the errors or mistakes occurred in this process of learning, it still can be identified and corrected by the teachers.

In every language, there must be a rule to make a sentence such as rule to indicate a time, a quantity, a statement, a question and etc. in English language, it is called grammar. Hornby as cited in Murtini, et al (2013) defines grammar as the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentence. Dykes (2007) say all people use grammar since they are able to speak, because grammar is related with ‘the abstract system of rules in terms of which a person’s mastery of his native language can be explained. It is important to learn grammar in order to construct a sentence well both spoken and written. There are many components of grammar such as passive voice. Passive voice is used to show interest in the person or object that experiences an action rather than the person or object that performs the action. In other words, the most important thing or person becomes the subject of the sentence. In addition, it shows an action which is done by the object or person.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researcher uses descriptive method and qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln in Dewi (2017) states qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory and paradigm that is distinctively its own nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. This

research uses the procedures of error analysis itself. In classifying the error, the researcher uses Dulay's classification of error.

The researcher uses some instruments to conduct this research i.e (1) hand out to give them information details about the lesson which they are going to learn at that time. (2) paper test to measure the students' ability and understanding about how far they have understood about the material which is going to be conducted by researcher. (3) Table of error analysis to classify and analyze the mistakes made by the students.

. First step before collecting the data, the researcher explained the passive voice materials to the students about what the formula is, how to form the active sentence to passive in the correct way and vice versa.

The researcher gave written test to the eleventh grade students to know how far the students know about passive voice and make the passive voice sentence with good syntactical. The researcher their background of knowledge, the curriculum and method in English teaching learning. The researcher also interviewed some students to know their opinion about learning passive voice. Then, the researcher used some books, papers, and took the data from the internet related to the research to support the theoretical framework . Descriptive analysis technique with the percentage from the frequency of information and divided with number of cases.

The formulation is:

$$P = \frac{ni}{\sum n} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P : Percentage of each error

ni : Total of given error

$\sum n$  : Total of whole error

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

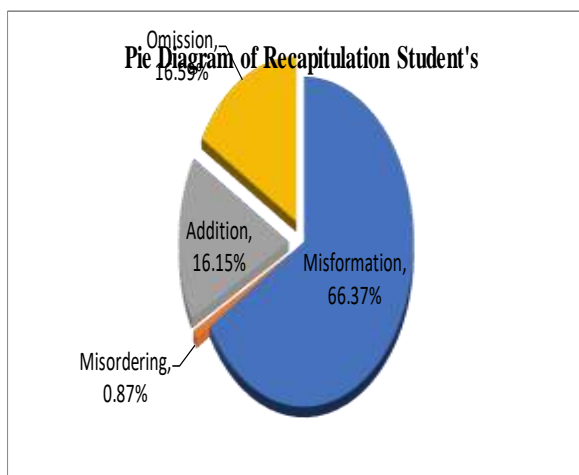
In this chapter, the researcher explains all the stuffs relate to the research. Besides that, the researcher also will define the data analysis which is taken from the reliable source. This research is about analysing the errors on the sentences made by university students in South Jakarta. The researcher gave a 10-item test to students which focused on Passive Voice. The data is taken from one class which has 38 students. Since the students have various ability in understanding the passive voice, so the researcher only takes 20 students' work randomly and gave a 10-item test to students which focused on Passive Voice.

By analysing the students' answer sheets, the researcher obtained their common error which mostly occurred according to Dulay's theory in the following table:

**Table 1. Recapitulation of Type of Error**

N o.	Types of Error	Freque ncy	Percen tage
	Misform ation	152	66.3%
	Omissio n	38	16.5%
	Addition	37	16.1%
	Misorder ing	2	0.8%

Based on the table 1. above, it can be concluded that the highest until the lowest frequency and the percentage of errors made by students derives from misformation with 152 errors or 66.3%, addition with 37 errors or 16.1% and misordering with 2 errors or 0.8%.



**Pie Diagram 1: The Recapitulation of students error**

Researcher displays the sample data according to its types of error based on Dulay's theory:

**Table 2. Omission**

Error identification	Types of error	Correction
Active sentence: I am preparing the documents.  Passive sentence: <i>The documents is going to be prepared by me.</i>	Omission of <i>to be</i>	The documents are <b>being</b> prepared by me
Passive sentence: The papers are going to be collected by the teacher.  Active sentence: <i>The teacher are going collect our papers.</i>	Omission of modal	The teacher is going <b>to</b> collect our papers.
Active sentence: I am preparing the documents.  Passive sentence: <i>The documents is going to be prepared by me.</i>	Omission of <i>to be</i>	The documents are <b>being</b> prepared by me
Passive sentence: The papers are going to be collected by the teacher.  Active sentence: <i>The teacher are going collected our papers.</i>	Omission of modal	The teacher is going <b>to</b> collect our papers.

**Table 3. Addition**

Error identification	Types of error	Correction
Passive sentence: My duster is always lost by my friend  Active sentence: <i>My friend is always losing the duster.</i>	Addition of <i>to be</i>	My friend always loses my duster
Passive sentence: The papers are going to be collected by the teacher.  Active sentence: <i>The teacher is going to be collect our papers.</i>	Addition of <i>to be</i>	The teacher is going to collect our papers.
Active sentence: I am preparing the documents.  Passive sentence: <i>The documents is going to be prepared by me.</i>	Addition of <i>to be</i>	The documents are being prepared by me
Active sentence: I am preparing the documents.  Passive sentence: <i>The documents is going to be prepared by me.</i>	Addition of modal	The documents are being prepared by me
Passive sentence: The math homework was being done by me.  Active sentence: <i>I am doing done the math homework.</i>	Addition of irregular verb	I was doing the math homework.
Passive sentence: The math homework was being done by me.  Active sentence: <i>I am was done the math homework.</i>	Addition of <i>to be</i>	I was doing the math homework.

**Table 4. Misformation**

Error identification	Types of error	Correction
Active sentence: I am preparing the documents.  Passive sentence: <i>The documents are being prepared by me.</i>	Misformation of <i>to be</i>	The documents are being prepared by me.
Active sentence: My dad drives a car every day.  Passive sentence: <i>The car was drives by my dad every day.</i>	Misformation of <i>to be</i>	A car is driven by my dad every day.

Active sentence: My dad drives a car every day.  Passive sentence: <i>The car was <b>drives</b> by my dad every day.</i>	Misformat ion of irregular verb	A car is driven by my dad every day.
Passive sentence: My duster is always lost by my friend  Active sentence: <i>My friend is always <b>losing</b> the duster.</i>	Misformat ion of irregular verb	My friend always loses my duster

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and the interpretation in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the highest until the lowest frequency and the percentage of errors made by students derives from misformation (152 errors or 66.3%), omission (38 errors or 16.5%), addition (37 errors or 16.1%) and misordering (2 errors or 0.8%).

According to the identification of the problem which the writer will conclude about the students' knowledge, understanding, and ability in learning passive voice, so the writer can assume some opinions as follow: first, the students have the tendency to make the structure on target language as the same as they learned their first language. Second, misformation is the most error occurred when the students made the sentences using passive voice. Third, the writer assumes about some factors trigger the students made errors. It is because of intralingual transfer, the incorrect generalization of rules within the target language. They lack of understanding of the target language includes *to be* also verb 3 or past participle.

Although the concept to change the active into passive sentence and passive into active as same as Indonesian language that is we need to change the object becomes subject and subject becomes the object. They tend to generalize the regular or irregular verb into regular verb which only needs to add *-ed* at the end of the word. The students also did not notice the

structure of sentences whether it used past tense, present tense, or continuous tense. Moreover, they became confused to put the words on to the correct order. That is why, sometimes some of them placed or wrote the wrong subject or object pronoun in a sentence of passive voice. Fourth, most of the students got confused to exchange the active sentence into passive and passive into active because they were hesitant to use the correct *to be* or the verb. In other hand, they did not pay attention or even lack of knowledge about the tenses used in a sentence. They assumed all the sentences have the same structure either in active sentence or passive sentence.

Fifth, since they still made a lot of errors in using the passive voice, the writer assumes that the students have not understood about the passive voice formula well. They made error of misformation, addition, omission and misordering with different frequency of errors. Next, in understanding *be* verb and *be* past, the students also lack of the knowledge. They often wrote the wrong *to be* in forming the passive voice because they did not pay attention to the tenses used on the sentence. They even omitted or added *to be* on a sentence when it is not needed. Finally, to understand the verb 3 or past participle, the students tend to generalize regular or irregular verb 1 and verb 2 into regular verb 2 which needs to add *-ed* at the end of the word. For example, *wrote* become *wroted* that should be revised into *written*.

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