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Student's Grammatical Errors

in Composing English Passive Sentences

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Abstract

Students in learning English grammar often experience difficulties, and are influenced by the first language, namely Indonesian. Students are influenced by the first language, Indonesian, in composing passive sentences and changing active sentences into passive sentences without first identifying the tense used. The students' difficulties in composing passive sentences resulted in difficulties in writing text properly. This is because most students do not understand how to change the active voice to the passive voice, use auxiliary verbs, and identify the tense. The study uses descriptive qualitative method that aims to analyze errors in the preparation of English passive sentences made by the 4th semester students of the English Education Study Program, Tadulako University. In arranging the passive form and which passive form is the most difficult for students to understand and after analyzing the students' mistakes in composing passive sentences, the researchers concluded that of the 50 students who became respondents, the problems that students make in composing passive sentences are 1) changing word order caused by not being able to distinguish between subject and object, 2) not understanding the tense used in active sentences resulting in a change in the auxiliary verb form, 3) reducing or eliminating one of the constituent elements passive, such as the BY preposition, auxiliary verb be, or the suffix –ED to the regular verb. 4) generalizing all passive sentence patterns. Type of error becoming the most dominant thing that students do in making noun clauses is misordering, which is changing the position of the subject and the object without considering the passive patterns and verbs that the sentence has. Next, the passive voice which is the most difficult for students to make is that they had difficulty in constructing passive sentences using the main sentence HAVE or GET followed by a non-finite verb (past participle).

Keywords: Error Analysis; Grammar; Passive Sentence

Introduction

In composing sentences in English correctly and correctly, good and correct knowledge of writing and grammar skills is required. States that a learner who understands grammar is he who is master and can apply language rules in expressing his ideas into the correct language form (Ur, 1988; Lee, 2020). The difficulty of students is in English sentence patterns where they have to compose passive sentences.

One aspect of grammar that is difficult for students to understand is the passive voice (Asif et al., 2019; Huang, 2019). Students in learning English grammar often experience difficulties, and are influenced by the first language, namely Indonesian. The most striking difference from English and Indonesian is the presence of tense in English, while Indonesian does not recognize this form which results in students in composing passive sentences in English disregarding the applicable rules based on the tense (Deveci, 2019; Masruddin & Karmila, 2018). Students are influenced by the first language, Indonesian, in composing passive sentences and changing active sentences into passive sentences without first identifying the tense used. The students' difficulties in composing passive sentences resulted in difficulties in writing text and paragraphs properly(Rana, Owaidh, & Harbi, 2019). This is because most students do not understand how to change the active voice to the passive voice, use auxiliary verbs, and identify the tense. The passive voice can be easily identified through the use of preposition BY with the basic sentence pattern: subject (recipient of action) + auxiliary verb + 3rd form verb (past participle) + BY + indirect object (actor of action) (Masruddin, 2019).The basic form of making a passive voice is the use of an auxiliary verb + 3rd form verb (past participle). In addition to the use of auxiliary verbs, the passive form can also be formed using verb GET (Alvin, 2014; Latupeirissa & Sayd, 2019). Here are the examples of passive voice:

1. Basic (be + V3)

    The book is written by the famous author.

2. Perfective (have + been + V3)

    The books have been written by the famous author.

3. Modal (modal + be + V3)

    The books will be written by the famous author.

4. Modal Perfective (modal + have + been + V3)

    The books will have been written by the famous author.

5. To-infinitive (to + be + V3)

The books <u>need to be edited</u> by the famous editor.

6. Non-finite-ing (being + V3)

The books <u>start being edited</u> by the famous editor.

7. Bare (V3)

The author let his books <u>edited</u> by the famous editor.

In addition to the pattern above, the passive voice can be formed using verb GET, for example: he got arrested; and verb HAVE, such as: the police had him arrested.

There are several types of errors and according to Brown (2007), the types of errors can be divided into four types, namely:

1. Common types of errors: addition, omission, substitution, and ordering.
2. *Phonology or orthography: lexicon, grammar, and discourse.*
  3. Global and local errors.
  4. Hidden and obvious errors.
  Dulay (1982) states that analyzing errors from the perspective of the Surface Strategy is to pay attention to the cognitive processes of learners in reconstructing a new language by looking at errors based on the following types:
    1. Omission
      This type is by missing or diminishing one of the items that should appear in the sentence. The missing items can be content words or function words (Dulay, 1982).
      (1) *I am study English* should be *I am studying English*.
    2. Addition
      This type is the addition of unnecessary items. The three types of addition are double markings, regularizations, and simple additions (Dulay, 1982).
      (2) *The woman does not needs to write the report* instead of *The woman does not need to write the report*. (double markings)
      (3) *I putted the book on the table last night* which should be *I put the book on the table last night*. (regularizations)
      (4) *The train is gonna broke it* instead of *The train is gonna break it.*(simple additions)
    3. Misinformation
      This type is the use of the wrong form of morpheme or structure (Dulay, 1982).

(5) *There are many fishes in the pond* which should be *There be many fish in the pond.*

4. Misordering

This type is the misplacement of morphemes in sentences (Dulay, 1982).

(6) *He is all the time late* instead of *He is late all the time.*

From the types of error, the researchers decided to use Surface Strategy Taxonomy in identifying the types of error made by students in composing passive sentences.

Some researches have been done relating to passive voice. One of them is a research entitled Error Analysis in Using Passive Voice conducted by Yasim, S., Roni, and Hasnawia in 2018. This research used descriptive qualitative and students of MA DDI Banua in Academic year 2015/2016 became the sample. The result of their research showed that the error of using verb 3 (40.55%) became the problem faced by the students.

Based on the background of the problems, the research questions in this study are as follows 1. what errors do students make in composing passive sentences? 2. What type of error is the most dominant that students make in composing passive sentences? 3. What is the most difficult passive form according to students?

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Method

This research was carried out at the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University. Students of semester IV class 2018, English Language Education study program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University became the population of this study. Class 2018 students are divided into 6 parallel classes, from class A to class F. The number of students who became the sample of this study is 20% of the total number of each class, with a total sample of 50 students. The number of questions on the test is 8 questions asking students to change active sentences into passive sentences. Data collection was taken through giving tests to 50 students at the fourth semester. Technique of data analysis is classifying the students' answer whether it is correct or not. Then, the incorrect ones are sorted based on four types of error. After categorizing the types of error, the researchers ranked the error made by the students based on the patterns of passive sentence to see the most difficult pattern.

Results

Researchers distributed questionnaires containing questions about active English sentences which must be converted into English passive sentences

consisting of 8 sentence patterns, namely 1) changing into the basic passive form (be + V3), 2) changing to the Perfective form (have + been + V3), 3) changing the active sentence to the Modal form (modal + be + V3), 4) changing to the Perfective Modal form (modal + have + been + V3), 5) changing to the To-infinitive form (to + be + V3), 6) changing the active sentence to Non-finite-ing (being + V3), numbers 7) and 8) changing the active sentence by using the main verbs HAVE and GET.

Table 1 Passive Form Using Basic (be + V3)

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
1	The students don't speak Indonesian in this class.	Indonesian is not spoken (by the students) in this class.	Indonesian doesn't spoke by the students in this class.	Misinformation	18.9%
			In this class, the students is not spoken Indonesian.	Misordering	21.6%
			-	No answer	2.7%
				Total	43.2%

The table above shows that students tend to make structural errors (misordering), namely students do not understand the differences between subject and object in sentence number 1 above so that when they are asked to change active to passive sentence, they do not change the position of the object in the active sentence to become the subject in passive sentence. The error rate of this type reaches 21.6%, which means that students do not understand the concept of passive sentence, namely changing object into subject.

Table 2 Passive Form Using Perfective (have + been + V3)

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
2	My students have not sent me their assignments.	I have not been sent their assignments by my students.	I haven't been sent my students assignments by them	Addition	2.7%
			The assignments were not sent to me by my students.	Misinformation	8.1%
			The assignments haven't been sent by my students.	Misordering	72.9%
			-	No answer	5.4%
				Total	89.1%

Table 2 above illustrates the type of student error dominated by misordering. More than 70% of students misordered the change from object to subject. Sentence number 2 above has a sentence pattern that uses 2 objects, namely direct and indirect objects. Students tend to be confused about which object to turn into a subject.

Table 3 Passive Form Using Modal (modal + be + V3)

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
3	My sister will look after me.	I will be looked after by my sister.	I will have been looked by my sister.	Addition	2.7%
			I will be	Omission	16.2%

		looked after my sister.		
		I'll be look after my sister.	Misinformation	5.4%
		After me will be looked by my sister.	Misordering	27.0%
		-	No answer	8.1%
			Total	59.4%

Table 3 shows that the type of student error is misordering, that is errors in putting the subject in passive sentence. From this, it can be seen that students do not understand the characteristics of object which can be in the form of noun phrase. There are 27% of students who make this mistake by putting the prepositional phrase form as the subject of the passive sentence.

Table 4 Passive Form Using Modal Perfective (modal + have + been + **V3)**

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
4	She will have made up that story.	That story will have been made up by her.	The story will be have been made up by her.	Addition	2.7%
			That story would have made up by her.	Omission	13.5%
			That story will have been made up by she.	Misinformation	8.1%
			The story will be had make up by her.	Misordering	8.1%
				Total	32.4%

Table 4 shows that 13.5% of students omitted this passive sentence pattern by

removing the auxiliary verb TO BE. The total error for the passive sentence with the Modal Perfective pattern (modal + have + been + V3) is 32.4%, including a pattern that is easily understood by students.

Table 5 Passive Form Using To-infinitive (to + be + V3)

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
5	Mary wants someone to love her. (Her = Mary herself)	Mary wants to be loved.	Mary is wanted someone to love her.	Addition	8.1%
			She wants to loved by someone.	Omission	10.8%
			Mary wanted to be loved.	Misinformation	37.8%
			Someone to love her is wanted by Mary.	Misordering	21.6%
			-	No answer	16.2%
				Total	94.5%

The table above illustrates the type of error in this pattern is dominated by misinformation, namely 37.8%. In general, students make a mistake by changing the tense form of the sentence. The total error of this passive sentence pattern reaches 94.5%. The percentage of error rate is very high because students only understand basic patterns of passive sentence.

Table 6 Passive Form Using Non-finite-ing (being + V3)

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
6	Mary hates people laughing at her. (Her = Mary herself)	Mary hates being laughed at.	Mary is hated people laughing at her.	Addition	10.8%
			Mary Hates	Omission	10.8%

laughed at by people.		
Mary hated laughed people who laughing at her.	Misinformation	24.3%
People who is laughing at her is hated by her.	Misordering	35.1%
-	No answer	13.5%
	Total	94.5%

The total error of this passive sentence pattern is 94.5%, where misordering dominates the mistakes made by students, namely by treating this pattern as a basic pattern of passive sentence.

Table 7 Passive Form Using Main Verb HAVE

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
7	The little boy fed the dog. (change the passive main verb to HAVE / HAD)	The little boy had the dog fed.	The dog had been fed by the little boy.	Misordering	100%
			Total		100%

Table 8 Passive Form Using the Main Verb GET

No.	Active Sentence	Passive sentences		Error Type	Number of Errors (%)
		Reconstruction	Student Answers		
8	The man fixed the washing	The man got the washing	The washing machine got	Misordering	100%

machine.	machine fixed.	fixed by the man.	
(change the			
passive main			
		Total	100%
verb to GET /			
GOT)			

The difficulty level of students is in the passive sentence pattern using the main verbs GET and HAVE. It can be seen from the percentage of student error, it reaches 100%, which means that none of the students can make passive sentences using the patterns mentioned above.

Discussion

By looking at the tables that describe the students' mistakes in composing passive sentences, the researchers try to answer the first question in the problem formulation, namely: *What errors do students make incomposing passive sentences?* Common mistakes made by students incomposing a passive sentence are making some mistakes in arranging or determining the subject, changing the tense form used in the active sentence, removing the auxiliary verb TO BE which is an absolute requirement for the formation of the passive sentence, not understanding the difference in the use of the verb followed by to-infinitive or gerund, generalizing all forms of passive sentences.

After answering the first question, the researchers try to answer the second question in the problem formulation: *What type of error is the most dominant that students make in composing passive sentences?* Misordering error type, which is the error in arranging words from active to passive sentences, is caused by students not understanding the form of the subject and the object of the sentence. The next ranking is misinformation, which is made by students in forming passive sentences by changing the tense which can be seen in the auxiliary verb TO BE which is used in passive sentences and in the 3rd form verb (past participle) which is an absolute requirement to passive form in English.

Next is to answer the third question in the problem statement: *What is the most difficult passive form according to students?* The passive form using the main verb GET or HAVE is the most difficult form made by students. Students assume that composing the passive form is by changing the object in the active sentence into the subject in the passive sentence. This does not work to passive sentence forms or patterns that use the main verb GET / HAVE or to-infinitive (to + be + V3) and non-finite-ing (being + V3) patterns.

On the first question questionnaire sheet, the researchers ask students to change active to passive sentences using the basic pattern (be + V3). Students

make misordering error in composing passive sentences. This is due to the lack of understanding of the students' function of elements in sentences that act as subject, object, and adverb. One example is by answering: *This class is not spoken Indonesian by the students*. This shows that the students cannot distinguish which is the subject, object, or adverb. Apart from misordering, misinformation error is also often made by the students. The same error is made over and over again, namely by changing the signifying elements of the present or past form of the auxiliary verb or by changing the form of the subject verb agreement. An example is by answering: *Indonesian don't speak by the students in this class* or *Indonesian wasn't spoke by the students in this class*. It can be seen from these anwers; the students change the tense and auxiliary verb which are not in accordance with the subject verb agreement. Likewise, the form of SPEAK verb is not converted into the SPOKEN form (past participle).

In the second question, the researchers ask the students to change active to passive sentences using the Perfective pattern (have + been + V3). This section is dominated by misordering errors, namely errors in arranging subject and object. This happens because in the second question, the active sentence contains 2 objects so that the students find it difficult to determine which object is appropriate to be the subject in the passive sentence. In general, the students' answers are: *The assignments haven't been sent to me by my students*. At first glance, this passive form can be said to be true but in terms of meaning it becomes less precise and natural because the right subject for the verb SEND is the animated form.

From the third question, the researchers ask the students to change active to passive sentence with a *Modal* pattern *(modal + be + V3)*. The type of error that the students often make regarding this pattern is misordering, which is an error in determining the subject for passive sentence. The students mistakenly understand verbs in the form of phrasal verbs such as *look after* so that they assume that after the verb LOOK is the object of the sentence, this also shows that the students are weak in identifying the form of phrases in sentences so that they think that *after me* should be a prepositional phrase and not entitled to be subject, to be made subjects by them. The next type of error that stands out is omission. This type is quite prominent because the students tend to omit the preposition BY, besides that they also sometimes omit the auxiliary verb BE.

Furthermore, the researchers analyze the students' answers to the fourth question. Researchers ask the students to compose passive sentences with the Modal Perfective pattern (modal + have + been + V3). The students make a few mistakes in this pattern. They tend to make omissions with a tendency to remove auxiliary verb BEEN, such as: *That story would have made up by her*.

In the fifth question, the researchers ask the students to compose passive sentence using a pattern *To-infinitive (to + be + V3)*. Misinformation error type dominates this question because the students tend to change the tense used in

active sentence. The answer should be *Mary wants to be loved* turned into *Mary wanted to be loved*. The next type of error is misordering. Most students change this sentence by following the basic pattern of passive sentences, namely by changing the position of the object into the subject. In terms of the meaning of the sentence, it becomes inappropriate because the indefinite word SOMEONE is the subject of the sentence, for example: *someone to love her is wanted by Mary*.

The researchers ask the students to compose passive sentence using the non-finite-ing (being + V3) pattern on the sixth question. Error in misordering type again dominates this question. The students generally compose sentences in question six as well as sentence in question five, namely by changing the position of the object into the subject so that their answers generally are: *people who is laughing at her is hated by her.* Researchers can conclude that sentences number five and six are an obstacle for students because these sentences have two verbs, namely finite and non-finite, so they have difficulty determining which verb should be converted into the passive form or past participle.

Finally, the researchers analyze the students' answers to the seventh and eighth questions which have the same pattern using different verbs, namely changing the main verb HAVE or GET. All of the students made error on these two questions and their error is misordering. The students repeat their error by changing the object to be the subject in passive sentences. It is clear that students are not accustomed to using this pattern and do not know that this pattern is a passive form. Comparing to the previous research conducted by Yasim, S., Roni, and Hasnawia in 2018 entitled Error Analysis in Using Passive Voice, theirs focused on two categories in error analysis, which are local and global errors while ours focused on four types of error based on surface strategy taxonomy. The result of theirs showed that the highest percentage of error was on verb 3 (40.55%) while ours showed that the highest percentage of error was on misordering or arranging words from active to passive sentences which is caused by students not understanding the form of the subject and the object of the sentence.

Conclusion

The scope of this research focused on the types of error and patterns of English passive sentence, and the researchers provided 8 sentences in different patterns, then the students were asked to change the active sentence to passive sentence. After analyzing the students' answers, the researchers conclude that from the 50 students who became respondents, the problems that the students make in composing passive sentences are 1) changing word order caused by not being able to distinguish between subject and object, 2) not understanding the tense used in active sentences resulting in a change in the auxiliary verb form, 3) reducing or eliminating one of the constituent elements passive, such as preposition BY, auxiliary verb BE, or the suffix –ED to the regular verb. 4)

generalizing all passive sentence patterns.

Next regarding error type, the most dominant thing that the students do in making passive sentence is misordering, which is changing the position of the subject and object without considering the passive patterns and verbs that the sentence has. The next rank is misinformation, namely misinformation made by the students in the use of tense and auxiliary verb BE.

Furthermore, to find out the form of the passive sentence, the results show that the students have difficulty in constructing passive sentences using the main verb HAVE or GET followed by a non-finite verb (past participle). In this case, the students assume that all passive sentences are by changing the position of the object into the subject so that when they find an active sentence that has two verbs, namely finite and non-finite, they have difficulty arranging it into a passive sentence, namely difficulty in determining which verb will turn into the past participle.

Finally, there are many aspects which can be analyzed about passive sentence. The result of this research may be used as early information to conduct other researches by re-evaluating or expanding a theory in a new context which can strengthen the material for teaching learning on passive sentence.

Acknowledgement

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