An Analysis of Students’ Errors in Transforming Active Into Passive Sentences at Bung Hatta University English Department

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Abstract
This research aims to investigate students’ errors in transforming active into passive sentences of simple past tense. This research is descriptive. The population of this research was the second-year students at Bung Hatta University English Department. A total sampling technique was applied in this research where there were 30 students involved in this study. The instrument for collecting the data was a writing test. To make the test reliable the researcher used the inter-rater technique. It was found that the reliability index of the test was 0.99 (very high correlation), which means that the test is reliable. The writing test is valid in terms of content because it covered all materials that students had learned. The result of this test showed that students make 1134.5 errors. It can be classified from the highest to the lowest errors: such as misformation (47.55%), misordering (26.80%), omission (23.45%), and addition (2.20%). This study recommends some future research to find out what the best solutions are to manage the best teaching practices to minimize the students’ errors in writing.

Keywords: Error, Active, Passive, Simple Past Tense.

INTRODUCTION

English has become the most widely spoken and important international language in the world today. It is estimated that over 1.5 billion people speak English, either as their first or second language. The importance of English as an international language lies in its ability to facilitate communication and understanding between individuals and cultures from different parts of the world. In the business world, English is the dominant language of commerce, trade, and finance, and it is used as a common language in international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Additionally, English has become the language of science, technology, and innovation, and most research publications are written in English. Thus,
English proficiency has become a crucial skill for individuals who wish to succeed in an increasingly globalized world (Rao, 2019; Septy, 2017).

Learning English language involves the mastery of four key skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as an understanding of grammar. Grammar is essential in language learning as it provides meaning and enables correct usage. It allows for the analysis of the form and function of words or sentences and serves as an invisible force that guides us in constructing meaningful sentences. According to Debata (2013), grammar is the study of words and the way they work together. Cowan (2008) adds that grammar is a set of rules that describe how words and groups of words can be organized to form sentences in a specific language. Therefore, understanding and mastering grammar is crucial for effective communication and language proficiency.

Having good writing skills requires the use of proper grammar as it makes writing meaningful and understandable. The use of correct grammar ensures that the reader can comprehend the ideas and meaning conveyed by the writer. Passive voice is a crucial aspect of grammar that students must study as it is commonly used in both written and spoken language. According to Joshi, as cited in Agustini (2017), passive voice is a type of sentence in which the subject is acted upon by the verb. Students often struggle with the tenses used in passive voice, leading to confusion. Therefore, a thorough understanding of passive voice and its usage is essential for effective writing.

Learning English, including passive voice, often involves making errors, but these mistakes do not necessarily have a negative impact on learners. Amara (2015) suggests that errors are a sign of mislearning and are considered undesirable in conventional language learning methods. However, Sompong (2017) argues that errors are crucial to the learning process, as learners can use them as a tool for improving their language skills. Errors can serve as an indicator of the learners' proficiency levels and help them identify areas for improvement. Even in a high-quality teaching-learning process, errors may still occur, but they can be a valuable part of the learning experience. Therefore, errors should not be viewed as solely negative but rather as an integral aspect of the language learning process.

Previous studies have examined the errors made by students when writing in the passive voice. Rahyono (2020) reported a total of 237 errors made by the students, with the highest frequency of errors found in the past participle form (48 errors or 20.25%). Omission and by phrases were also common errors, with the same total number of occurrences (40 errors or 16.87%). Other common errors included singular-plural agreement (38 errors or 16.03%) and subject-object confusion (36 errors or 15.18%). Additionally, there were instances of errors resulting from unnecessary additions (20 errors or 8.48%). The least common error found was the incorrect use of the auxiliary verb "be" (15 errors or 6.32%). These findings can help educators identify the most common errors made by students and tailor their teaching methods to address these specific issues.

Students can make errors in their writing, whether consciously or unconsciously, that can impact their ability to master grammar. According to Nurlela (2015), misformation was the most
common error, accounting for 90% of all errors made by students. Omissions accounted for 7% of mistakes, while ordering errors made up 3% of the total errors. These findings highlight the importance of teachers addressing the most common errors in their instruction, as misformation can significantly hinder a student's progress in mastering grammar. By identifying and correcting errors, educators can help students improve their writing skills and achieve greater success in their language learning journey.

This study, "An Analysis of the Second-Year Students' Errors in Transforming Active Voice into Passive Voice of Simple Past Tense at the English Department of Bung Hatta University," is a relevant and important investigation that could contribute to the improvement of language teaching methods. By examining the common errors made by second-year English students in transforming an active voice into the passive voice, the study can help identify the areas where students struggle the most. This information could inform the development of effective teaching strategies and interventions to help students overcome their difficulties and improve their language skills. Additionally, the study could provide some valuable insights for language educators and curriculum developers seeking to improve the overall quality of English language instruction.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design for this research is descriptive research. The use of descriptive research in this study is appropriate as it aims to provide a comprehensive description of the students' errors in using the passive voice of simple past tense. According to Refnita (2018:17), “Descriptive research involves collecting the data in order to test a hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study.” On the other hand, this type of research is commonly used to describe a phenomenon or a current status of a subject without manipulation or control. It is useful in examining the characteristics, behavior, attitudes, or opinions of a particular population or sample. By conducting this research, the researcher can gather data to answer questions and test the hypothesis related to the topic. The descriptive research design is suitable in this case as it allows the researcher to identify and classify the types of errors made by the second-year students.

The population of this study consists of 30 second-year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. However, 1 student was absent, so the participants who took part in the study were 31 students. The researcher utilized a total sampling technique in selecting the sample. According to Sugiyono (2021), total sampling is frequently used in a small population of less than 30.

The data were collected through a writing test, which aimed to identify the students' errors in transforming simple sentences from active voice to passive voice in the simple past tense. The test comprised 35 simple sentences in the active form. To ensure the validity of the test, the researcher employed content validity, which Refnita (2018:96) defines as the degree to which a test measures an intended content area. The researcher constructed the test based on the syllabus and teaching materials provided to the second-year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. Overall, the
research design appears to be appropriate for the research question and the use of content validity and total sampling provides a solid foundation for the research methodology.

In this research, using inter-rater technique was applied to ensure the reliability of the test. The researcher had another scorer to check the test. By doing so, the objectivity of the test could be obtained. To determine the coefficient of correlation between the errors identified by the two assessors, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment Formula, which is a reliable statistical tool suggested by Sugiyono (2021).

The researcher collected data about students’ errors in transforming an active voice into the passive voice of simple past tense. The procedures for collecting data are as follow:

1. The researcher shared the test paper with the students.
2. The researcher explained the instruction that the students had to follow.
3. The researcher asked the students to do the test in 40 minutes.
4. The researcher collected the test paper.
5. The researcher and the second assessor marked the students’ errors and identified the errors due to the criteria in the table below:

Table 1. The Criteria of Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Types of Errors</th>
<th>Criteria of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>omission</td>
<td>Omission of verb a. students make errors if they omit verb (seen, put, taught, etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omission of article</td>
<td>b. Students make errors if they omit the article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omission of subject-object</td>
<td>c. Students make errors if they omit subject or object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omission of by</td>
<td>d. Students make errors if they omit by.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omission of be</td>
<td>e. Students make errors if they omit be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>Addition of article a. students make errors if they add article which is not needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Misformation</td>
<td>Misformation of verb a. Students make errors if they do not use a correct verb form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation of be</td>
<td>b. Students make errors if they do not use an appropriate be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation of subject-object</td>
<td>c. Students make errors if they do not put subject or object in appropriate grammatical feature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation of article</td>
<td>d. Students make errors if they do not use an appropriate article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Misordering</td>
<td>Students make errors if they do not arrange the sentence correctly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. The assessor counted the frequency of students’ errors. The table frequency of students’ errors can be drawn as follows:

**Table 2. The Frequency of Students’ Errors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s code:</th>
<th>The Types of Errors</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sentences</td>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>Addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>article</td>
<td>subject-object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research used the following steps in analyzing data:

1. The researcher and second assessor counted students’ errors.
2. The researcher counted the average number of errors by using the following formula:

   \[ M = \frac{\text{score from the first assessor} + \text{score from the second assessor}}{2} \]

3. The researcher counted the percentage of errors by using the formula as follows:

   \[ P = \left( \frac{F}{N} \right) \times 100\% \]

   \[ P = \text{the percentage of error} \]
   \[ F = \text{the frequency of error} \]
   \[ N = \text{the total number of errors} \]

4. The researcher described the result of data analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the writing test, which required second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University to transform active voice sentences into the passive voice of simple past tense, revealed that the students made errors in four categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Specifically, there were 266 (23.45%) instances of omission errors, 25 (2.20%) instances of addition errors, 539.5 (47.55%) instances of misformation errors, and 304 (26.80%) instances of misordering errors.

Based on the given results, there are two theories that could be discussed are:

1. Error Analysis Theory: This theory focuses on identifying and analyzing the types of errors that language learners make in their writing or speaking. The findings of the writing test can be analyzed using this theory to better understand the nature of the errors made by the second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University. For example, the theory suggests
that errors can be classified into different categories, such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, which is consistent with the findings of the study (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

2. Contrastive Analysis Theory: This theory suggests that language errors are caused by the differences between the native language of the learner and the target language. The findings of the writing test can be analyzed using this theory to identify which aspects of the target language, in this case, English, are most challenging for the second-year students at Bung Hatta University. For example, if the errors are primarily related to the use of articles or verb forms, this could suggest that there are significant differences between the students' native language and English in these areas (Wardhaugh, 1970).

**Omission Error**

Omission errors refer to errors in writing where certain elements of a sentence are left out or omitted. In the context of this study, the omission errors were specific types of errors made by second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University in transforming active voice sentences into the passive voice of simple past tense. The types of omission errors identified in the study include the omission of verbs, articles, subject-objects, by, and "be."

Upon analyzing the students' answers, the researcher discovered that the students made several types of errors. Specifically, they made 25 (2.20%) errors in omitting verbs, 53 (4.68%) errors in omitting articles, 19 (1.68%) errors in omitting subject-objects, 122 (10.75%) errors in omitting "by," and 47 (4.14%) errors in omitting "be."

**The Kind of Errors in Terms of Omission**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher identified that 23.45% of the errors made by second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University were related to omission. Upon further analysis of the data, the researcher identified five specific types of omission errors in transforming active voice sentences into the passive voice of simple past tense. These types of errors include the omission of verbs, articles, subject-objects, by, and "be."

There are two theories that could be relevant to this finding to discuss, they are:

1. Interlanguage Theory: This theory suggests that language learners create a mental representation of the target language that is influenced by their native language and their previous language learning experiences. In the case of the identified omission errors, this theory would suggest that the second-year students at Bung Hatta University are likely to be using their mental representation of English that is influenced by their native language, resulting in the omission of certain elements that are not as prominent in their native language.

2. Error Analysis Theory: This theory focuses on identifying and analyzing the types of errors that language learners make in their writing or speaking. The identification of the five specific types of omission errors, such as omission of verbs, articles, subject-objects, by, and "be," aligns with this theory. The theory suggests that analyzing and categorizing the types of errors can help educators better understand the nature of the errors and develop effective strategies to address them.
Table 3. Omission Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types of Omission Errors</th>
<th>Sample of Errors</th>
<th>Correct Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Omission of the verb</td>
<td>Was the arm of the injured little girl by the doctor? Those flowerpots weren’t under the table by Mrs. Rose</td>
<td>Was the arm of the injured little girl bandaged by the doctor? Those flowerpots weren’t put under the table by Mrs. Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Omission of article</td>
<td>The ship wasn’t sunk by Navy in February 2008. The meeting in the ballroom wasn’t postponed by President last night.</td>
<td>The ship wasn’t sunk by the Navy in February 2008 The meeting in the ballroom wasn’t postponed by the President last night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Omission of subject-object</td>
<td>Was to Europe in the 9th century brought by the Arabs? Was the thief locked in a room in the police station?</td>
<td>Was paper to Europe in the 9th century brought by the Arabs? Was the thief locked by the policeman in a room in the police station?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Omission of by</td>
<td>Elementary school students were bit fierce dog this morning. Irish was broked the mug this morning.</td>
<td>Elementary school students were bitten by fierce dog this morning. The mug was broken by Irish this morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Omission of be</td>
<td>A necklace of sparklingly colored wooden beads wore by Madonna. The form of passive voice of simple past tense knew by English Department students?</td>
<td>A necklace of sparklingly colored wooden beads was worn by Madonna. Was the form of passive voice of simple past tense known by English Department students?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Omission errors may be caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of understanding of the grammatical rules related to the passive voice in the simple past tense, careless reading or writing, or a lack of attention to detail. In addition to the students’ intuition or prior knowledge of the English language, such omission errors can also be a result of interference from the students’ first language, as some languages have different grammar rules and sentence structures from English. Last but not least, the time pressure or stress during the writing task could also contribute to the occurrence of omission errors.

The Kind of Errors in Terms of Addition

Addition errors refer to errors in writing where extra elements are added to a sentence, which can alter its meaning or make it grammatically incorrect. In the context of this study, the addition errors were another type of error made by second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University in transforming active voice sentences into the passive voice of simple past tense. However, the study found that addition errors were less frequent than omission errors, with only 2.20% of the errors falling into this category. An example of an addition error could be adding an
unnecessary word or phrase to a sentence, such as "I saw a movie last night, and it was really good at the cinema." Here, the addition of "at the cinema" is redundant since it is already implied that the movie was seen in a cinema.

Moreover, there are some examples of errors:

1. The luxurious places in this city weren’t owned by an aristocratic family.
2. Was top hats and suit weary a men?

The correct sentences are:

1. Luxurious places in this city weren’t owned by an aristocratic family.
2. Were top hats and suits with tails worn by men in cities?

**The Kind of Errors in Terms of Misformation**

Misinformation errors, in the context of this study refer to errors made by second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University when transforming active voice sentences into the passive voice of simple past tense, where the verb tense, auxiliary verb, or word order is incorrect or does not conform to the rules of standard English grammar.

This study found that misformation errors were the most common type of error made by the students, with 47.55% of errors falling into this category. Examples of misformation errors include using the wrong tense or form of a verb, such as using "swam" instead of "swum," or "drank" instead of "drunk," or using the incorrect auxiliary verb, such as using "am" instead of "was" in a passive sentence. These errors can affect the meaning of the sentence and make it difficult to understand.

As the researcher observed, the students made multiple types of errors, including misformation of verbs, be, subject-object, and "by." Specifically, they made 294 (25.91%) errors in misforming verbs, 162 (14.28%) errors in misforming "be," 64.5 (5.69%) errors in misforming subject-objects, and 19 (1.67%) errors in misforming "by." For example, there were four (4) types of errors in transforming an active voice into the passive voice of simple past tense in terms of misformation, they were as follows:

**Table 4. Misformation Errors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types of Misformation Errors</th>
<th>Sample of Errors</th>
<th>Corrected Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation of verb</td>
<td>Her beautiful scarf was blon by the wind. A necklace of sparkingly colored wooden beads was wore by Madonna.</td>
<td>Her beautiful scarf was blown by the wind. A necklace of sparkingly colored wooden beads was worn by Madonna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation of be</td>
<td>The pyramids was pointed out by a guide to us Those flowerpots under the table wasn’t put by Mrs. Rose.</td>
<td>The pyramids were pointed out by a guide to us. Those flowerpots under the table weren’t put by Mrs. Rose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation of subject-object</td>
<td>Her beautiful scarf was blown by her wind. Were those pictures for an assignment drawn by her?</td>
<td>Her beautiful scarf was blown by the wind. Were those pictures for an assignment drawn by Shanti?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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| Misformation of article | The mistake was committed by her by joining their secret group. The big house wasn’t built by the rich family in my hometown. | A mistake was committed by her by joining their secret group. The big house wasn’t built by a rich family in my hometown. |

In short, such misinformation errors happen could be caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of understanding of the grammatical rules related to the passive voice in the simple past tense, a lack of familiarity with the vocabulary used in the sentence, or a lack of attention to detail. Additionally, the students may have relied on their intuition or prior knowledge of the English language, rather than carefully analyzing the sentence and applying the appropriate rules. Misinformation errors can also be a result of interference from the students’ first language, as some languages have different grammar rules and sentence structures from English.

The Kind of Errors in Terms of Misordering

Misordering errors, in the context of this study refer to errors made by second-year students in the English Department of Bung Hatta University when transforming active voice sentences into the passive voice of simple past tense, where the order of the words in the sentence is incorrect or does not conform to the rules of standard English grammar.

The study found that 26.80% of errors made by the students fell into the misordering category. Examples of misordering errors include placing the object before the subject, such as "The book was read by the student" instead of "The student read the book," or placing the preposition in the wrong position, such as "By the student, the book was read" instead of "The book was read by the student." These errors can also affect the meaning of the sentence and make it difficult to understand.

There are examples of these errors:

1. A helicopter was driven air force by pilot last week.
2. Three students leave the school was saw by the teacher.

The correct sentences are:

1. A helicopter was driven by air force pilot last week.
2. Three students were seen by the teacher leave the school.

Such misordering errors may happen for several reasons. One possible reason is that the students may not have a good understanding of the rules of English grammar or the specific rules for constructing passive sentences in the simple past tense. They may also lack experience or practice in using passive voice sentences, which could result in confusion about the proper word order.

Another reason could be the influence of the students' first language or mother tongue, as the word order in some languages is different from English. For example, in some languages, the object comes before the subject in a sentence. This can lead to errors in word order when translating to English. It's also possible that misordering errors can occur due to carelessness or rushing, where students do not take the time to carefully construct their sentences and review them for errors.
CONCLUSION

After analyzing and discussing the, this study concluded that second-year students in the English Department at Bung Hatta University made errors in transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense. Specifically, 23.45% errors were related to omission, 2.20% errors were related to addition, 47.55% errors were related to misformation, and 26.80% errors were related to misordering.

This study then concluded that second-year students in the English Department at Bung Hatta University still made a significant number of errors when transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense. The errors were classified into four categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The study revealed that the most common type of error was misformation, which accounted for nearly half of all errors. The errors in misformation of verbs, "be," subject-object, and article were particularly common. The study also found that the students made errors in omitting important elements such as verbs, articles, and "by." Addition errors were less common, but still occurred. The high frequency of errors suggests that the students may need further instruction and practice in transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense. The study's results could be used to design targeted instructional interventions to improve the students' language skills in this area.

There are several implications of this study. Firstly, the findings suggest that there is a need for further instruction and practice to help second-year students in the English Department at Bung Hatta University improve their language skills in transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense. Secondly, the study highlights the specific areas in which students are making the most errors, namely misformation of verbs, "be," subject-object, and article. This information could be used to design targeted instructional interventions that focus on these areas. Thirdly, the high frequency of errors in omitting important elements such as verbs, articles, and "by" suggests that instruction in these areas is particularly important for helping students to avoid making these errors in the future. Finally, the results of this study could be used to inform the development of instructional interventions and materials aimed at improving students' language skills in transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense. These interventions could be designed to address the specific errors identified in the study and to provide students with opportunities for practice and feedback.

There are also the best lessons from this study; It is important to identify specific areas in which students are struggling in order to design effective instructional interventions. Errors in transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense are common among second-year students in the English Department at Bung Hatta University, and misformation of verbs, "be," subject-object, and article were the most common types of errors.
Instructional interventions and materials can be designed to specifically address the errors identified in the study, and provide students with opportunities for practice and feedback. The study highlights the importance of providing students with further instruction and practice in transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense, especially in areas where students are most likely to make errors. Overall, the study demonstrates the importance of identifying and addressing specific areas of weakness in student writing, and provides guidance for designing effective instructional interventions to improve language skills in this area.

Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions and recommendations can be made to improve the students' language skills when transforming active voice into passive voice of the simple past tense. Firstly, language teachers could provide targeted instruction and practice activities that focus on the areas where the students made the most errors. For example, instruction could be provided on the correct use of verbs, "be," subject-object, and articles in passive voice. This instruction could be followed by practice exercises to reinforce learning and provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge. Secondly, teachers could incorporate feedback mechanisms to provide students with information on their errors and how to correct them. For instance, teachers could provide feedback on written assignments, highlighting common errors and providing guidance on how to avoid them in the future. Thirdly, language teachers could provide opportunities for students to practice transforming active voice into passive voice in context, such as through reading and writing activities. This could help students understand the importance of using passive voice and how it can be used effectively in different situations. Then, teachers could encourage students to practice and apply their language skills in real-life situations, such as through conversations or presentations. This could help students develop their language proficiency and increase their confidence in using passive voice in different contexts. Last but not least, future researchers are expected to find out what are the solutions from the lecturers and the students to manage the best practices and to minimize the students’ errors in writing.

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