STUDENTS' ERROR IN CONSTRUCTING PASSIVE VOICE

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Abstract

Passive is considered as one of the important aspects in English grammar that should be mastered by the leaner. In fact, however, most of the students make some mistakes that can be considered as the errors since it happens regularly. Hence, this research tried to find out the students' error in constructing the passive sentence. The qualitative-explanative design was used to describe the students' error. The data gathered through documentary technique was analyzed by using Miles and Huberman's interactive model that is data reduction, data display and then verifying or drawing conclusion. The result of data analysis showed that there were two types of students' errors in constructing the passive, namely past participle error and auxiliary error.

Key word: errors, passive voice

1. INTRODUCTION

Voice is the form of a verb which is used to say what the subject does or what happens to the subject. The voice of a verb indicates whether the subject is performing the action (active) or receiving the action (passive). Active voice describes a sentence where the subject performs the action stated by the verb. Whereas passive voice is the subject is acted upon by the verb and also can be formed only with a transitive verb. This research was focused on the passive form.

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 and it is used to make writing clearer and easier to read. The passive is most frequently used when it is not known or not important to know exactly who performs an action (Azar, 2000). Sometimes, even when the speaker knows who performs an action, s'/he chooses to use the passive with the by-phrase because s'/he wants to focus attention on the subject of a sentence." In other word passive voice is used to hidden subject that performed or doing the action or do not know or do not want to express who performed the action.

Use the passive when it is not necessary to mention the agent (the person or thing doing the action) because the agent is obvious, not known, or not important. The emphasis is on the action itself or on the receiver of the action (Raimes 1998). In other words, passive sentence can be constructed use preposition "by"when the agent is important and also can construct without preposition "by"when the agent is not important. In addition, Dykes (2007) said that passive form is composed of an auxiliary verb plus a participle. Constructing passive voice the object of an active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb. The ways to construct passive voice such as be + past participle and followed by preposition byis called the "agent", be + past participle without preposition by,

modal + be + past participle, stative passive and always followed by preposition, and get + past participle.

Concerning the way of construction of the passive, a good passive sentence needs to follow the rules of the sentence structure. The students, however, got errors in changing the active to the passive even though it has been taught to them. This case was found at the preliminary study in which the third semester students of English Department of STKIP NiasSelatan got many errors in constructing passive sentences.

Error refers to nonconformity in writing. Error reflects gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what correct (Ellis, 2003) is. When students did some Error for two or more times it shows that students have difficulty. Therefore, this research tried to find out the students error in constructing the passive voice to be a consideration in teaching passive to the students in the future.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the objective of this research, qualitative-explanative was used to describe the errors of the students in constructing the passive voice. The documentary technique was used to have the students work sheets about passive form as a source of data of this research. The datacollected were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman's interactive model.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As the result of the analysis, the data were presented as follows:

Table 1. Students' Error

Num.	Types of error	Examples
1	Error of past participle	Student: The book was ~~wrote~~ when he was 16 years old.

		Correct :the book was **written** when he was 16 years old
2	Error of auxiliary	Student : the book ~~are~~ read by them Correct: the book **is**read by them

The table above showed that the students got errors in using past participle and auxiliary.

Past participle error

The formula of passive voice is "Be + Past participle". Based on the student's work sheets, they were error in using past participle or verb-3 in their sentences. In the example [(1)] the book was wrote when he was 16 years old, the students use verb "wrote" from the active sentences, they don't change the verb form to verb-3. Based on the pattern of the passive the verb should be change to the past participle that is "written". Actually, the students know that the past participle of the verb is written but they did notrealize when they were constructing the passive from of the sentence that the verb should be hanged. Other example of student error of past participle is [(2)] water is being drink by me. In the second example showed that the students made an error in the use of the verb in passive form. In that sentence, the verb "drink" should be changed to past participle "drunk". The correct form of the second example is "water is being drunk by me"

Auxiliary error

Since in the passive voice the receiver of the action is emphasized, the auxiliary that follows the subject then in passive need to be considered. In the example [(1)] the book *are* read by them, the students used plural auxiliary "are" but the subject is singular "book". The students just used the auxiliary from the active form of the sentences. Since the subject of the passive sentence is singular, the auxiliary should be "is". The correct sentence is "the book is read by them".

Moreover, in constructing the passive form of a sentence, sometimes the students omitted the auxiliary especially in modals. For example [(2)]the sentences can divided into two clauses. In this example, the students omitted "be" after auxiliary can. The sentences should be "the sentences can be divided into two clauses".

The finding stated above showed that the students' error in constructing the passive sentences were in the use of past participle and the auxiliaries verb. The construction of the passive should be based on the pattern of the passive of each tense. Each tense have its own pattern. Nonetheless, all tenses in passive form use past participle. It is similar with Azar (2002) who stated that form of the passive is *be + past participle*. In fact, the students got errors in the use of past participle. Most of the students use the verb from the active form without changing it to verb-3. Moreover, the students make an error in the use of auxiliary verbs. Since each tense has different auxiliary with other tenses, the students got

difficulties to differentiate them. The use of auxiliary in passive should be based on the person of the object receiving the action. When the active sentence is changed to passive, the object of the sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence. This supports the statement of Azar (2002) that in the passive, *the object* of an active verb becomes *the subject* of the passive verb. In addition, only transitive verbs (verbs that can be followed by anobject) are used in the passive. It is not possible touse intransitive verbs

These errors were caused by low comprehension of the students about the form of the passive itself. This strengthen the statement of Elmadwi (2015) that students' difficulties in constructing passive voice caused by systematic errors such as interference of the mother tongue, over-generalization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concept hypothesize. Students' error in constructing passive was caused by lack of mastery of some other grammatical elements such as tenses and some sentence patterns. In other words, the students' error in constructing the passive was affected by many factors including their capability in understanding the English grammar.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of this research, it is concluded that the student's error in constructing the passive form are in the use of past participle and auxiliary verbs. The comprehension of the students about the form of the verbs and the English tenses affects their capability in constructing the passive. Thus, it is suggested to the English teacher to pay much attention to the students' errors in constructing the passive voice. The teacher is suggested to emphasize the pattern of the passive of each tense in teaching learning process. Then, the students are suggested to get better understanding about verb form.

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