

## **The Challenges of Changing Active to Passive Voice Towards the Third Grade Students of Muhammadiyah Tangerang University**

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### **Abstract**

Grammar seems to be an unavoidable challenge for most learners, especially when it comes to acquiring Active to Passive Voice. Active sentences are sentence patterns where the subject does work, and passive sentences are sentence patterns where the subject accepts work. This is a difficult time for English Education students at Muhammadiyah University, Tangerang. The purpose of this research is to find out students' challenges in learning Active to Passive Voice and how they deal with these problems. The selected participants were 12 students from the Intermediate English Grammar Class of 2022. The research method used was qualitative. Data collection was carried out through tests and interviews. The data shows that students have three major difficulties in changing Active to Passive Voice such as placing subjects and objects, using auxiliary verbs, and determining past participles. In addition, two strategies are used by students to overcome learning obstacles. Through understanding formulas to help them master active and passive learning and doing a lot of active and passive exercises to help them better understand the active and passive material.

**Keywords:** Active Voice, Passive Voice, Grammar

### **Abstrak**

Tata bahasa tampaknya menjadi tantangan yang tidak dapat dihindari bagi sebagian besar pelajar, terutama dalam hal memperoleh Suara Aktif dan Pasif. Kalimat aktif adalah pola kalimat yang subjeknya melakukan pekerjaan, dan kalimat pasif adalah pola kalimat yang subjeknya menerima pekerjaan. Saat ini merupakan masa yang sulit bagi mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tantangan siswa dalam pembelajaran Active to Passive Voice dan bagaimana mereka mengatasi permasalahan tersebut. Peserta yang terpilih adalah 12 orang mahasiswa Intermediate English Grammar Angkatan 2022. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui tes dan wawancara. Data menunjukkan bahwa siswa mempunyai tiga kesulitan besar dalam mengubah Active menjadi Passive Voice seperti menempatkan subjek dan objek, menggunakan kata kerja bantu, dan menentukan past participle. Selain itu, ada dua strategi yang digunakan siswa untuk mengatasi hambatan belajar. Melalui pemahaman rumus-rumus untuk membantu mereka menguasai pembelajaran aktif dan pasif serta banyak melakukan latihan aktif dan pasif untuk membantu mereka lebih memahami materi aktif dan pasif.

**Kata Kunci:** Kalimat Aktif, Kalimat Pasif, Tata Bahasa

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## **INTRODUCTION**

English is the official language of many Commonwealth countries and is widely understood and spoken. English is spoken in more countries in the world than any other language. More countries in the world than any other language. Meanwhile, according to Kasihani (2001:43), English is the first foreign language that is considered important for the purpose of accessing information, absorption and

development of science, technology, art, culture and fostering relationships with other nations.

According to Wells who is quoted from the Ministry of Education in Kepmendiknas No. 22/2006: English is a tool for communicating orally and writing. Communicating is understanding and expressing information, thoughts, feelings, and develop science, technology, and culture by using the language. The ability to communicate in a complete sense is the ability to discourse, namely the ability to understand and or produce oral and or written texts that are realized in four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. these four skills are used to respond to or create discourse in social life. Therefore, English subjects are directed to develop these skills so that graduates are able to communicate and discourse in English at a certain literacy level.

Then according to Chodijah (2000: 21) English language learning is very much needed for all people, both at an early age and in adulthood. is needed for all groups, whether early childhood or adulthood because English is an international language that all people must know. Not only understood and understood but English must also be mastered.

From the above statement it can be concluded that in learning language, whether a first, second, or foreign language, teaching the language component is part of the language program. Although focus four basic skills, but the focus should also be on teaching and learning English language components and where one of them is English grammar. This is consistent practical teaching in the field takes place in an integrated manner, teachers and prospective teachers and prospective teachers need to understand some important concepts related to the three language components, especially those concerning the English. In language learning, the teaching of language components is part of the language program. In general, language components consist of three, namely grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

In learning English, one must master four basic skills in English namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, this is not the only with Decapua's (2008:1) statement: "Grammar must be explicitly taught and grammar is absolute and fixed, the purpose or goal that the speaker must achieve to be a good speaker or writer of language." Points the above statement means that grammar is an important part besides the four basic English skills, people must learn it to help them acquire English.

Grammatically structure provides a lot of useful information for language learners. Furthermore, it is helps with grammar generation accurate language, both spoken and written. Exist to be clear, individuals you must have solid knowledge of grammar. Let's put it this way in other words, if people don't understand grammar, communication will not be so smooth.

Grammar is the system of language. People sometimes describe grammar as the "rules" of language (Fitria, 2018). In the study of language, grammar occupies a central position in the study of language (Fitria, 2020). According to Young (2013: 11), the term 'grammar' can be used to refer to the system itself. When we talk about English grammar, we are referring to the rules that make up the

language. Grammar determines how words are organized to form meaningful units. Every language has its own distinct grammar (Coghill & Magedanz, 2003). Grammar, the rules of a language that govern sounds, words, sentences, and other elements, as well as their combination and interpretation. In a limited sense, the term refers only to the study of sentence and word structure (syntax and morphology), excluding vocabulary and pronunciation. Grammar is the system of language. People sometimes describe grammar as the "rules" of a language; but in fact no language has no rules. Chalker & Weiner (1998: 177) state that 'Grammar is the entire system of a language'. Which means grammar is the entire system of a language. Meanwhile, according to Stevenson (2010:760), "Grammar is the whole system, and structure of a language or of languages in general", which means Grammar is the whole system of a language.

### **The Importance of Grammar**

Many researchers have expressed their views on the importance of grammar learn a language based on their discoveries. Saaristo (2015) said: "Grammar is Basic concepts of general linguistic theory. In his recent research (Saaristo, 2015), He found that more than half of the students (62%) expressed the view that grammar has one Partial or important role in language research. A study by Jean & Simard (2011) also found that students and teachers consider grammar teaching as something essential in learning a language. Grammar is also defined as a form language, but more than form, says Larsen-Freeman (2014), what does form mean and when and why they are used. We cannot create a correct way of communication our thinking without forming grammatically correct sentences. Author's conclusions in research by an element of Larsen-Freeman (2014), Peng (2017), Sogutlu & Veliaj-Ostrosi (2015), Saaristo (2015), it can be concluded that grammar is mastering a language that cannot be ignored due to its universal nature application in all areas of language.

### **Active and Passive Voice**

Active voice is a sentence pattern in which the subject does the work, and passive voice is a sentence pattern in which the subject does the work using the object sentence. Active forms of pronunciation are more commonly used in our daily lives than passive forms of pronunciation. However, we often find the passive voice in formal writing, such as in newspapers, articles, magazines, and scientific articles. It is used because the object of the active voice contains more

Important information than the subject (Kusnadi 2011:284). The active voice is used to indicate that the subject is performing an activity, thus the subject is the author of that activity, while the passive voice is used to indicate that the subject is not the actor but the recipient of the activity. (Rizka and Hidayati, 2015:63).

Another view on passive voice can be found in Radford (2020). He said that the primary characteristics of passive voice are: The following four qualities: The first is worth it, It should be noted

that the passive voice needs to be used Auxiliary verb "to be". The second important point It should be noted that the passive voice must be in the past tense. The participle form of the main verb. Third the special thing is that the sentence is written in passive voice. Usually ending with the word "by", it performs same as subject role in active voice sentence. The fourth point is supplementary, In the active voice it may be assumed that the role of the subject when used in the passive voice.

### **Students' Difficulties in Changing Active to Passive**

Batubara and Mahardika (2020) found that the most dominant difficulties experienced by students in changing active to passive sentences were: difficulty in determining the subject, difficulty in using the auxiliary verb be, and difficulty in using past participle in passive sentences, and The most dominant difficulty is in the past continuous form which they cannot understand well, because of the use of tools (dictionaries). Quoting from Grammarly, passive sentences are a form of sentence where the subject receives an action, in contrast to active sentences where the subject takes an action. In simple terms, passive sentences are the opposite of active sentences. Often students are confused about placing subjects and objects.

They also added that the second thing that is difficult for students is the use of the auxiliary verb Be. The passive sentence formula is Be + V3. This is absolute, it will not change. Be- is included in the prefix di-. Simply put, the active sentence means "to eat", while the passive sentence means "to be eaten". Be "Is" in English is the same as the affix (di-) in Indonesian. (The word "is" is Be, or a substitute for the prefix di- in Indonesian). Well, the use of "be" varies depending on the tense.

Finally, students have difficulty changing verbs from active sentences into passive sentences. There are two types of verbs that are difficult for students themselves, namely: regular verbs and irregular verbs. According to L.G. Alexander, "for regular verbs the past participle has the same form as the simple past tense: Examples arrived, arrived, and arrived. For irregular verbs, the simple past and past participle can be formed in various ways: Examples drink, drank, drunk." Let's take a simple example, "My mother chose the cloth yesterday." In this case, students failed to change the verb "Choose" into the past participle form (Chosen). Instead the student answered by answering "Choose". Clandfield on one site explains that "...memorizing lists really works. I can't count the number of students I've met who can remember past tense verbs by saying them along with their infinitive forms. However, I also know students who can memorized a list of all the irregular verbs in the past tense but had great difficulty putting them together in a sentence, at least orally."

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that although some students had a fairly good understanding of passive voice forms, some other students had some problems in understanding and improving their understanding of this material.

### **Preview Research on Active and Passive Learning**

The research entitled "Analysis of errors in changing active sentences into passive simple past tense" was carried out in his journal of Sinamo (2019). The research approach used in this study is qualitative. The total number of errors made by students in converting simple past tense active voice into passive voice is 349. This is divided into 43 (12.32 percent) omission errors, 10 (2.86 percent) addition errors, and 154 (44.12 percent) incorrect information errors and 142 (40.68 percent) incorrect order errors. Format errors are the most common mistake students make when converting simple past tense active voice into passive voice (44.12 percent). The students make mistakes when converting the active voice to the passive voice in the simple past tense because they do not understand how to change the expression from active to passive voice. Students often get bored with the same old routine.

Darohim (2020) published research in his *Pern Journal* titled "Analysis of students' errors when changing active to passive voice." According to the results of this study, the most common mistakes students make when switching from active to passive voice include omission errors, addition errors, formation errors, and order errors. The student finds it difficult to understand sentences in the passive voice, especially the four tenses: namely simple present tense, simple past tense, present continuous tense, and past continuous tense. Educational conditions, lack of experience in using English, teachers' explanations are not clear enough, and differences between Indonesian and English passive sentences are factors that affect students' ability to form passive sentences.

Based on the above data, The researchers can explain the similarities between previous research and the current research. Both researchers study the mistakes students make when switching from active to passive voice. Both researches were qualitative research. The difference between previous and current research is that previous research does not focus on specific tenses, whereas current research focuses on simple present and simple past. Previous survey collection approaches to data used tests and questionnaires, while current survey collection approaches used interviews and tests. The next difference is the level of research. While previous studies were conducted at universities, the current study is conducted at the high school level.

## **METHOD**

This study was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University Tangerang, Cikokol Indonesia. Because grammar instruction is very important for students who want to become English teachers, this study was conducted as part of an English education program. In qualitative research, the researchers focus on conducting tests and interviews as data collection of The Intermediate English Grammar course was chosen as the study location. Grammar is the study of the formation and structure of sentences. It is an integral part of the language and is very important for

learners. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of obstacles faced by students at Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang in converting from active sentence form to passive sentence form. The use of passive and active voice plays an important role in students' academic studies. The active voice is generally considered to be more direct and clearer, while the passive voice can be used to emphasize an object or focus on the perpetrator of an action. These two formats he needs to understand so that a student can write in different ways to suit academic situations.

### **Participants of the Study**

The Research participants were students of Intermediate English Grammar Semester 3 for the 2023/2024 academic year. There were 36 students in the Intermediate English Grammar class, and the participants selected in this research were 12 students.

### **Instruments of Data Collection**

Tests and Interviews were chosen to collect data. The following questions were used as instruments to collect data for this research by the author:

1. What is your difficulty in Active & Passive voice?
2. What is your strategy for learning Active & Passive?

### **Procedures of Data Collection**

To begin, we will first share the test question link on Monday 13 November 2023 and give a week to fill in the questions. The questions are presented in English so that participants can express their thoughts in detail so that we can find out original and comprehensive data. After that, we scheduled an appointment with each participant on Monday 20 November 2023 to conduct an interview. The interview was conducted for approximately 18 minutes. The interviews were conducted when the campus schedule was online, so we had to visit the participants in different places. We used an audio recorder to record interview conversations.

### **Data Analysis of Procedures**

Recorded interview conversations were transcribed. Transcribed data is grouped based on our specified themes. These themes were developed in response to the research questions. Students' difficulties in learning active and passive voices and strategies for dealing with the problems. Based on each answer, the data is clearly displayed in the "Results" and "Discussion" sections. Some of the interview results will be provided in original English.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

We offer research findings and discussion in this section in an attempt to answer the research question about students' difficulty changing Active to Passive Voice in Intermediate English Grammar courses. Based on the test, we realized that they had difficulty in understanding Active to Passive. This

was also supported by the results of their interviews, all 12 students agreed that understanding Active and Passive was very challenging and another person said there was no difficulty at all. Regarding what they experienced and how to overcome it will be discussed further.

### **The Test**

No	Questions
1.	You have never watered these plants
2.	They say that the man is living in London
3.	Marylin eats the bread
4.	Everyone says he is a great footballer
5.	The boss asked him to leave the meeting
6.	They are repairing the church bells at the moment
7.	She kept my watch
8.	The old books fill the room
9.	Someone has already paid the workers
10.	They will show the paintings at the exhibition until Monday

Based on the questions above, the results of their answers that we found were:

No	Participant	Score
1.	Participant 1	8
2.	Participant 2	5
3.	Participant 3	4
4.	Participant 4	7
5.	Participant 5	6
6.	Participant 6	3
7.	Participant 7	7
8.	Participant 8	8
9.	Participant 9	6
10.	Participant 10	6
11.	Participant 11	5
12.	Participant 12	4

The findings obtained by the researchers were that there were several students who made mistakes after completing the tests given, namely changing verbs, inappropriate use of to be, subject placement, and verb placement. To find out specific data and information on student difficulties, it will be explained as follows:

#### **The placement of subject & object**

The test results showed that 30% of the students were unable to change the subject's position in a passive sentence from that of the object in an active sentence. They might fail to provide appropriate answer for question number 2, 9, 10.

#### **Inappropriate use of auxiliary be**

In reference to this issue, 50% of students were unable to insert the appropriate "to be" for the sentence in active sentence into a passive sentence. It was evident that the students struggled to decide

which option to include in their response. It could be seen from several questions of the test number 1, 3, 6, 7, 8.

### **Verb Changes Problem**

There are 20% of students who are unable to change verbs. The students are unable to change active sentences into passive sentences by changing the verbs into the correct form. The students find regular and irregular verbs to be two types of verbs that are challenging. This can be seen in questions number 4 and 5.

### **Students' Difficulties in Learning Active to Passive**

First, this research found that the difficulty of determining Subject and Object makes students confused when changing Active to Passive or vice versa. This was expressed by 6 out of 12 students. Sometimes teachers ask their students about the differences between subject and object, and often students fail to identify them. Freeman and Long (1991) say that students have difficulty in determining subject and object in active and passive voice caused by a lack of appropriate learning strategies. The students often only rely on memorization in determining subjects and objects. This can make it difficult for students to determine subjects and objects in complex sentences or in different contexts.

#### **The following is an excerpt from the discussion:**

##### **Excerpt 1**

My difficulties in passive and active is Identifying the subject and object. Sometimes, determining the subject and object in a sentence can be tricky, especially when the sentence is complex or the word order is unusual. Then Choosing the appropriate verb form. In passive voice, the verb form changes, and it can be challenging to remember and use the correct form. And Deciding when to use active or passive voice. Choosing between active and passive voice can be subjective and depends on the context and the intended emphasis. (Participant 11).

##### **Excerpt 2**

Well, from the question yesterday I found that the difficulty is When you don't exactly know which one is the object and subject, I think that what makes it difficult so turns it into active voice and passive voice. (Participant 9)

##### **Excerpt 3**

The difficulty in active and passive voice lies in understanding the difference between the two and knowing when to use each one. In active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action, while in passive voice, the subject receives the action. (Participant 8)

The students claimed that the biggest challenge that caused confusion during the learning process was the inability to distinguish between the subject and object in the active and passive voice. These



findings are similar to the findings of Darohim (2020), who found that in a test at the El-Madani Modern Islamic Boarding School, 13.82% of students were unable to change the position of the object in an active sentence to the position of the subject in a passive sentence. They may fail to provide appropriate answers to questions because of this.

The second problem found in this research is the existence of auxiliary verbs. 2 out of a total of 12 students expressed difficulty in using auxiliary verbs which express a certain function. Classification of auxiliary verbs, the auxiliary verb "be" (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been), the auxiliary verb "do" (do, does, did), the auxiliary verb "have" (have, has, had).

The following is an extract from the interview:

#### **Excerpt 4**

The difficulty in learning active voice and passive voice was when I found the verb to be which uses was and were, because I didn't understand that in the sentence I had to use was or were to make it a passive voice sentence. (Participant 5)

#### **Excerpt 5**

My difficult in Active & Passive voice is understanding the difference between the two and using them properly in conversation or writing. I'm also often confused about when to use auxiliary verbs and how to change sentences from active to passive. (Participant 12)

As seen in the excerpt, it is understandable if students have difficulty using auxiliary verbs because they do not understand the rules of each function. As a result, students may make mistakes when did constructing Active to Passive sentences. This is also happened with that Darohim (2020) also expressed difficulty in using auxiliary verbs.

Third, four out of twelve students said that they had difficulty using Past Participles in learning Active to Passive in sentences. The following is an excerpt from the discussion:

#### **Excerpt 6**

My difficulty in passive voice and active voice is actually I sometimes like difficult in sentence structure. Due to the use of verb and change in word order. (Participant 6)

The excerpt reveals that students generally have difficulty identifying the use of Past Participles when doing exercises on the topic. This is possible because students lack the ability to understand the material they have studied. This is comparable to the research findings of Darohim (2020), where students were unable to change verbs into forms suitable for changing active sentences into passive sentences. In other words, students may fail at the introductory level because they do not understand the underlying formula. There are two types of verbs that are difficult for students themselves, namely: regular verbs and irregular verbs.

## **Students' Strategies to Comprehend Active and Passive**

Students definitely experience challenges in every learning process. However, they must always have their own solution to overcome these obstacles. This research found two methods where students try to solve their learning problems related to active and passive. The first thing students do to overcome learning difficulties is to understand the formula. Four out of twelve students believed that increasing active and passive voice by understanding the formula could help their learning. The following is an excerpt from the discussion:

### **Excerpt 9**

My strategy for learning passive voice is to understand the passive voice formula. (Participant 2)

### **Excerpt 10**

Well, my strategy for understanding active and passive sentence is to understand the concept of whether the sentence is active and passive and then practice with example of active and passive sentence to distinguish which ones is correct so there it can be practice and understand. (Participant 6)

Algeo (1995) states that understanding passive sentence formulas is an important thing for students to learn. The second method is to ask your peers. Seven of twelve students said that they solved their learning challenge by practice more on the material. The following is an excerpt from the discussion.

### **Excerpt 7**

I think just like the other material, in English you need exercise more like, pretty much like math, you need to exercise more so you know which one is the correct one or which one is more sounding one regarding with the answer. (Participant 9)

### **Excerpt 8**

My strategy for learning active and passive voice is to practice identifying and using both types of voice in sentences, and to understand the situations in which each type is most appropriate. I also make sure to review and understand the rules and structures for forming active and passive voice in different tenses and moods. Additionally, I seek out examples and explanations from reliable sources to further solidify my understanding. (Participant 1)

According to the excerpt, doing exercises will help students gain a deeper understanding of what they have learned.

According to Algeo (1995) understanding the concepts of active and passive is an important first step in studying these two forms of sentences. He also emphasized the importance of training and practice to strengthen this understanding.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings show that students face three types of challenges when learning active to passive, as

well as two strategies for overcoming these problems. The first challenge faced is placing the subject and object. The students find this challenging because in active voice the subject becomes the actor carrying out the action, whereas in passive voice the subject becomes the object receiving the action. Second, the students show that it is difficult to use auxiliary verbs. This may be due to their inability to distinguish each function well. Third, the students have difficulty determining past participles because there are two types of verbs, namely regular and irregular. To overcome every learning problem, the students try to find solutions to develop and produce better learning. The students started by understanding formulas to help them master active and passive learning. Second, when they do not understand the material, they do a lot of practice on active and passive to help them gain a better understanding of active and passive.

However, the conclusions of this study have their own limitations due to personal limitations and preferences. As a result, different studies with comparable contexts may yield different results. In this scenario, the research results cannot be applied to all situations. It also encourages other scientists who wish to conduct similar research to expand the scope of their research. It would be interesting to further investigate the difficulty of learning active to passive voice, for example by comparing two different groups according to the level and age of the participants. In conclusion, the authors believe that this study can serve as a resource and insight for those working in the field of grammar education.

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