

INVESTIGATING THE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING MASTERY USING PASSIVE SENTENCES (A Case Study At Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi In English Department)

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Abstract: the issue of English teaching is always an important one and it will continue to be one of the dominant points in education problems. Through qualitative method, this study aimed to explore the investigating about students' mastery in descriptive writing specifically in using passive sentences. The data were collected by test, observation, and in-dept interview with English lecturer and English program in Islamic state university Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. The results of the data analysis revealed that many students are not mastery in descriptive writing in using passive sentences. The findings show that passive sentences are not discussed specifically in the classrooms. Recommendation for English subject to make a lesson plan about passive sentences and practice them in a scientific writing.

Keywords: *Passive sentences, Descriptive writing, English teaching*

Introduction

English includes skills and components of language, which are very necessary for the learners. The components of English language encompass grammatical structure, phonology, spelling, and vocabulary that can influence English learners skill at writing, speaking, reading, and listening.

The parts of speech are one of the grammar components such as nouns, prepositions, verbs, pronouns, adjective, adverbs, conjunctions, interjections, and intensifiers.

¹ Eugene argue, determiner, auxiliary verb, and connector. Passive sentences as parts of grammatical structure are very important in writing. Passive sentences have different types, they are as follows: modals, gerunds, infinitives, passive get, and stative passive, and there are eight tenses can be utilized to construct passive sentences and the only transitive verb that can be applied to make passive sentences.

Writing like the other language skills, need to be dealt with at the particulars of linguistics.² In writing, the ability to use grammar is very needed to make out the meanings clear, precise and grammatical. In scientific writing, which stress on impersonal meaning rather than personal always use passive sentences. In additions, there are some kinds of writing, they are: descriptive writing, argumentative writing, and narrative writing. Descriptive writing gives senses, impressions, sound, taste, smell, things, and emotions. Description helps the readers through their imagination to visualize a scene or a person, or to understand passive sentences in descriptive writing is assumed to influence the ability of students to master written English language. Therefore, English department students who have been given the subjects of Structure I, II, III, Grammar and Syntax should know and master in passive sentences. Based on the explanation above, the researchers would like to know the students' mastery in descriptive writing specifically using passive sentences.

Frame of Theory

Passive sentences is different from active sentence, where active sentence is a sentence if viewed from the subject, predicate, object, and complement used comprises two forms: the subject that is do of the action and predicate is active verb.³ For example:

Yandi opened the window

Andi sings a song

While passive sentences is the subject as the recipient or receiver of the action and its predicate is passive verb.⁴ Hence, it can be concluded that the object of active sentence becomes the subject of passive sentences. In passive sentences we put BE plus participle (V3), for example.

The doors are opened by Yandi

A song is sung by Andi.

There are many kinds of passive sentences, namely.

- 1) Passive infinitive. There are two forms of passive infinitive, namely simple passive infinitive (SPI) and perfect infinitive (PPI).⁵

Junior high school is ruled *to be finished* in three years (SPI)

The students are supposed *to have been taught* English subject (PPI)

- 2) Passive gerund. Passive gerund is passive –Ing forms such as *being done, being cleaned*.⁶ Passive gerund is divided into two, namely present passive gerund and perfect passive gerund, for example.

I remember *being taken* to Jambi as clean city (present passive gerund)

You regretted *being talked* by some people in that meeting (present passive gerund).

We remember *having been taken* to Jambi when we were young (perfect passive gerund)

- 3) Passive tenses. In English, not all tenses can be utilized to create passive sentences. Only eight tenses are commonly employed to be passive sentences, as follows.

Table 1
Passive Tenses

Tenses	Active	Passive
Present Tense	Andis writes poetry	Poetry is written by Andis
Past Tense	Rina made handicrafts	Handicrafts were made by Rina

Present continuous	Doni is reading a novel	a novel is being read by Doni
Present perfect	She has read the novel	The novel has been read by her
Past perfect	Rani had read a philosophy book	a philosophy book had been read by Rani
Past continuous	Emha was writing a book when he studied	A book was being written by Emha when he studied
Future tense	Iwan will visit you next Sunday	You will be visited by Iwan next Sunday
Future perfect tense	Anto will have sent a postcard before afternoon	a postcard will have been sent by Anto before afternoon

- 4) Stative passive. Stative passive can be followed by past participle. The past participle is often like an adjective. It describes or gives about the subject of the sentence. This similar to the function of an adjective.⁷

Joni is married

Moko is tired

- 5) Passive modal auxiliary verbs. Modal auxiliary verbs can also be used to make passive and active sentence.⁸ To create passive sentences, BE is placed after modal auxiliary verb. The following common auxiliary verbs: can, could, must, have to, had to, ought to, will, would, has to, shall, should, may.

Table 2

Passive Modal Auxiliary Verb

Active	Passive
Doni <i>will</i> post the letters	The letters <i>will be</i> posted by Doni
Yani <i>can</i> buy some shoes in supermarket	Some shoes <i>can be</i> bought by Yani in supermarket
Darmen <i>could</i> finish the job yesterday	The job <i>could be</i> finished by Darmen yesterday
Andi <i>would</i> send the letter last Monday	The letter <i>would be</i> sent by Andi last Monday

Miftah <i>must</i> do all assignment	All assignments <i>must be</i> done by Miftah
All children <i>have to</i> undergo elementary school	Elementary school <i>has to</i> be undergone by all children
Teacher <i>should</i> explain their subject clearly	The subject <i>should be</i> explained clearly by teachers
The subject <i>should</i> be explain their subject clearly	The subject <i>should be</i> explained clearly by teachers
Ani <i>ought to</i> study computer	Computer <i>ought to</i> be studied by Ani
They <i>may</i> bring food into the classroom	Food <i>may be</i> brought into the room by them
You <i>might</i> play football yesterday	Football <i>may be</i> played by you yesterday
Hamid <i>needs</i> to finish this material tonight	This material <i>needs to</i> be finished tonight by Hamid

Then descriptive writing gives senses, impressions, feeling, sound, taste, smell, things and emotions. Descriptive writing helps the reader through their imagination, to visualize a scene or a person to understand a sensation and emotion.⁹ Descriptive writing is a kind of composition that describes event, condition a place, behavior of some and situation. Whereas, with it the readers as if they could see by themselves what the writer sees and hear. Can be concluded that descriptive writing is a writing that tries to describe something with the real condition, so that the readers can imagine (see, listen, smell, and feel), what the writer's imagery to the readers. Descriptive writing is to answer, "how is the condition of something?" data and facts used to explain something by describing there are some manners of a good descriptive writing as follows: choose the theme, form the purposes of writing based on the theme, act and observe the object that is written and create the explanation.

Research Method

The study was designed as a qualitative one with a case study approach. This approach is appropriate for understanding deeply an English teaching program in Tarbiyah

Faculty of Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. In collecting data we used in-depth interviews three lecturers and fifteen English students' department program. We also make a test to know students mastery in descriptive writing in using passive sentences.

In analyzing data we begin with individual transcribing the interview data. Every researcher read deeply the data and then makes transcriptions. Then we make a meeting to make a same perception on our data, next we make a coding. Next step we make the trustworthiness of the research we make a long interviews about forty minutes. Then, we make a member checks through asking participation feedback the data findings. The last, in making the dependability of the findings, we make a thick description.

Findings and Discussions

The researchers found out that lecturing process in English Department in Tarbiyah Faculty UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Passive sentences are not discusses specifically by the lecturers, if there is discussion about passive sentences it is just studies passive sentences in simple forms as to change active to passive sentences forms, there is no more explanation about the others passive forms, like: modal auxiliary verb, passive infinitive, passive gerund, and stative passive. To construct the passive sentences form active to passive sentences form the students still confuse formulate the tenses in passive sentences. Most of the students are not mastery tenses forms, while the lecturer is not give clear explanation.

In observation the researchers look the monotonous method in English teaching. The lecturer dominantly using discussion method where the students percentage their topic in front of class, while they are not mastery the material. So discussions go on to be not interested and developed. The monotonous methods made the students are not interested and motivated to mastery and follow the subjects. The passive sentences are very important by students because the passive sentences are more frequently found in written. It is to be useful when they write a composition or

scientific writing. In fact, the researchers found out that the lecturer of writing was not discussed about passive sentences.

These facts make the students cannot write a composition by applied passive sentences. In explanation the materials there is none of lecturer using media, if in teaching English use media possibly the students to be interested and motivated to develop the materials. Then in lecturing process most of the students are very passive to give their opinion or to add the information about the materials. The lecturers was not tried to make the classroom to be life and fresh, by using variations methods.

The factors and difficulties are faced by students

After the students' ability to master passive sentences in descriptive writing known. It can be seen that there are 10% in excellent category. In good category, there are 15%, while in very poor category in the first and second test, there is no student included in this category. It can be concluded that students' ability to master passive sentences is in enough category. This category is not satisfied, in these facts the researchers found that there are some factors that influence the students' mastery in passive sentences in descriptive writing, that factors as follows.

First, many of the students don't understand and master the forms of tenses, they still master tenses forms like present tense, past tense, and perfect tense, in the others forms they are still confuse. In which the forms of tenses are the foundation for students to construct passive sentences from the active sentences.

Second, the students have not studied and are still confused the other passive sentence forms such: simple present infinitive, perfect infinitive, passive gerund, and stative passive. This condition can be seen in the result of students' score to master passive sentences in descriptive writing; most of them cannot answer the other forms of passive sentences. Based on the questionnaires 75% of students cannot understand and know the passive in forms of stative passive, simple present infinitive, perfect

infinitive, and passive gerund. This can be concluded based on the interview with English lecturer.

“Passive sentences in Structure I, students still study simple forms such as changing from active form to passive form. We did not discuss the other passive forms yet like stative passive, passive gerund, present infinitive and perfect infinitive. The material of Structure I still review all the components of grammar, so the passive sentences are not discussed specifically.”

Third, the subject of Syntax which studies how the sentences are formed in English did not study about passive sentences. It can be seen based on questionnaires that 62% of students stated that they never studied about passive sentences in subject of Syntax. In addition, based on the interview result with the lecturer of Syntax exposed that.

“In subject of Syntax, there is no discussion and study about passive sentences specifically.”

Then the subject of writing for students, the lecturer did not discuss and teach about descriptive writing and apply the passive sentences, this can be seen based on questionnaires, 70 of students never study descriptive writing and how to apply the passive sentences.

In observation the researchers look the lecturer dominantly use discussion method. The students discuss about the materials who have given by lecturer and they solve the problems by themselves. While most of them did not master about the discussion materials. While most of them did not master about the discussion materials. The lecturers' information is very less, this makes the class to be vacuum and the students are not interested to follow the lecturing. This observation can be seen too based on interview with English lecturer.

“The methods used are discussion and assignment. The students are given the title of English book that they have to look for as reference in discussion. The students are hoped to discuss and solve the problems by themselves.”

However, in the facts the students cannot understand passive sentences clearly. The students are very passive to command their friends in front of class. Fourth, the researchers look the facilities such as language laboratory is very seldom they use in lecturing method. The student' studies in a class are not comfortable. Addition the university library is very limited about English specially grammar. This make the students feel difficulties to look for the materials caused the books in university library is very old anymore.

Fifth, internal factors also influence the students' mastery. The researchers found out 54% of the students have not extracurricular activities connected with English such as courses or English study clubs. Only 46% of the students have it. Then the researchers found that 62% of the students difficult to look for grammar. This condition made the students difficult to look for grammar materials especially passive sentences.

Sixth, based on documents and interviews that there is limited number of lecturers specialize in English. This fact influences the students' mastery because the lecturers are taken from other universities that teach in English program. These borrowed lecturers did always come to the classroom to do lecturing process. The frequency of meeting is very limited. It can be seen from the result of interview with one of students in English program.

“The lecturers from other universities who given the lectures are not always present, and when they are present, they just give assignments with very limited explanation. We are very feeling difficult because we don't know the subjects of English have been studied and what we will study next.”

The other factors are in lecturing process of English, there are some lecturers who don't specialize in English teach English. This factor tremendously influences the students' mastery. In teaching English the lecturer not only can speak English but also has to master in their field of study. This fact can be seen from interview.

“The lecturer whose fields of study are not English but they teach English subjects. Sometimes, they do not master the materials, and make their explanation no so clear and we cannot understand it.”

Seventh, the students are never practiced to face grammar test combination with writings, such as descriptive writing, argumentative writing, persuasive writing, and narrative writing. The students' should accustom with the passive sentences in a composition because it is always applied when the students write a composition or scientific writing. After the researchers give the passive sentences in a descriptive text. It can be seen from the result of the test percentage of students' mastery is 65%. This is not so satisfied because still include in enough category.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings and discussion above, the researchers conclude that: First, the factors and difficulties are faced by students to master passive sentences in descriptive writing: First, most of students are not mastery tenses forms (past continuous, passive infinitive, passive gerund). Second, the lecturer is not explained specifically about the others of passive forms. Passive sentences still discuss how to change active to passive form. Third, very limited the facilities in campus library and very less the students can access the language laboratory.

¹ Fuad Mas'ud, *Essential of English Grammar* (Yogyakarta: BPFE, 1992), p. 61.

² Thornbury, Scott, *How to Teach English* (US: Pearson Education Limited, 1999), p. 45.

³ Fuad Mas'ud, *Essential of English*, p. 167.

⁴ DM. Neuman, *English Grammar for Proficiency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 30.

⁵ Fuad Mas'ud, *Essential of English*, p. 20.

⁶ Raymond Murphy, *English Grammar for Proficiency* (Hongkong: Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Limited, 1990)

⁷ Bety Azar, *Understanding English Grammar* (Prentice Hall Inc, 1992), p. 294.

⁸ Bety Azar, *Understanding English*, p. 130.

⁹ Thomson, *a Practical English Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 25.

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