

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' PROBLEM IN COMPREHENDING PASSIVE VOICE

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### Abstract

This research aims to find students' problems and the causes in comprehending passive voice. This research was conducted at SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Data collections used tests, questionnaires, and interviews. The test and questionnaire are used to analyze students' problems and the causes of in passive voice. Data from interviews are used to complete the questionnaire results. The results of this study found three student problems in comprehending passive voice; first, students' difficulties in determining the subject and object in the passive voice, the cause of the problem is that students have difficulty changing subject pronouns to object pronouns. Second, students' difficulty in determining verb be, the causes of the problem are students have difficulty determining verb be based on the subject (singular and plural), students have difficulty determining verb be based on tense, and students sometimes forget to add verb be. Third, students' difficulties in distinguishing past form and past participle, the causes of the problem are students' difficulties in determining regular verbs and irregular verbs, in irregular verbs students often confuse V2 and V3 and lack of mastery of English vocabulary.

**Keyword:** *students' problems, causes of students' problem, passive voice*

### Introduction

Nowadays, the growth of English is unavoidable due to the global rise of English. English is the primary language of instruction in many professions, it is widely utilized by students, teachers, and people all over the world (Parupalli, 2019). In the process of teaching and learning English, all skills must be strengthened, one of the skills in English is writing. According to Hariyandi (2020), writing is one of the most difficult English abilities to learn, and it is also a challenge for the teacher who teaches it, because the teacher doesn't just teach the structure of the text, but also teaches the students how to use lexis and grammar. When students write sentences and paragraphs, they need strong knowledge and hard thinking with good in English grammar.

Thornburry in Yunita et al (2017) argues that grammar describes the principle that controls how languages are written, and it seeks to explain why sentences can be accepted. Although the study of writing and grammar is separate, students must apply the knowledge of grammar to their writing. In this context, learning and understanding grammar is an essential aspect for students. But the problem is English grammar and Indonesia grammar is really different. However, Some Indonesian students still

have problems understanding difficult grammar. They find big differences between English and Indonesian grammar, sound systems, and cultural concepts. One of the grammar that students must learn is passive voice. According to Moaddab (2014) stated that passive voice is used when a writer wants to emphasize someone or things being acted on. Passive voice is occasionally used by people to emphasize the action. In addition, passive voice can be used if the writer wants to avoid talking about the person who performed the action. Sometimes students do not fully understand the passive voice in a sentence.

Parrott (2000) states students have a few problems when it comes to using the passive voice. First, difficulty in determining subject and object, the object in the active voice is moved into the place of the subject in the passive voice, and the subject of the active voice is moved into the position of the object preceded by the preposition "by" (Joshi, 2014). Second, difficulty in using of auxiliary verb be, the most difficult component of English is the verb. A verb is a word that makes an assertion about a person, thing, or idea and is essential to the meaning of a sentence (De Boer, 1982). In their first English sessions, Indonesian students are almost immediately exposed to the verb's form. Although the forms are simple to define and comprehend, students of all skill levels find them difficult. Third, difficulty in distinguishing the past tense form (V2) and the past participle (V3), according to Alexander (1988), stated that the past participle for regular verbs takes the same form as the simple past tense, for example, arrive, arrived, and arrived. There are numerous methods to produce the simple past and past participle for irregular verbs, such as drink, drank, and drunk. Many students still have problems distinguishing the difference between the simple past tense and past participle when learning passive voice since irregular verbs are more difficult to learn than regular verbs.

This phenomenon also happen when students learn passive voice, problems in comprehending passive voice occur at SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke. Many students at this school feel that English is a subject that is scary and difficult to understand. This is one of the factors that students lack mastery in learning English, especially in comprehending passive voice. When researcher observed at SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke, researcher found the students still confused about the tenses, because each tense has its own rules. Students have problem in changing an active sentence into passive sentence, it can be seen from changing English grammar one time to another, by adding or deleting rules and restructuring the system.

Therefore, based on the background of the problem above, the researcher have an interested in conducting research on "An Analysis of the Students' Problem in Comprehending Passive Voice at SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke in Academic Year 2023/2024" to find students' problem in comprehending passive sentence and researcher want to know more deeply about their problems and causes in comprehending passive voice.

## **Method**

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach, based on research problems and objectives of the research. According to Ary et al (1992) states that descriptive qualitative is research which gives a description and interpretation of the situation. It is considered appropriate because the research aims to identify, classify, and describe the problem of changing active sentences to passive sentences made by the 12th grade students of SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke. The population in this research was all of

students of SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke. For the purposes of choosing subjects for this research, researcher used a technique known as Purposive Sampling to select participants which makes it easy for researcher to choose their students. According to Gay and Airasian in Sartika (2017), purposive sampling is the process of selecting the participants for a research based on the group's experience or expertise. There were 11 students at 12th grade SMA IT Ibnu Khaldun Merauke is the sample to be used.

To identify students' problems in changing active sentences into passive sentences, the instruments to be used are test, questionnaire and interview. The researcher used the test for that research in order to find out what students are having problem writing passive voice. According to Brown in Rijasti (2017), A test assesses an individual's ability, understanding, or competence in a specific topic. The students' ability to switch the sentence from active to passive voice was tested. For each student, the researcher gave them a test for 45 minutes in which they are asked an individual question based on their thinking.

The questionnaire to students is also used by the instrument in this research. The researcher is used a closed-questionnaire type in this research. According to Arikunto in Diana (2019), A closed questionnaire allows the respondent to answer questions directly. The researcher submitted to the students a questionnaire and gave them 9 questions. This helped us identify the cause of a student's problem in passive voice.

Researcher used interview to support data questionnaire. Sugiyono (2006) defines interviews as encounters between two people who exchange information and ideas, in which they ask questions and answers to determine the meaning of a given topic. The researcher conducted the structured interview as part of this research. The structured interview, as it does not allow for deviation or exploration of topics other than the set questions, is somewhat similar to a survey. Interviews with 9 students followed.

When examining the results of student tests, Researchers will use the formula used by teachers at school according to the lesson plan used:

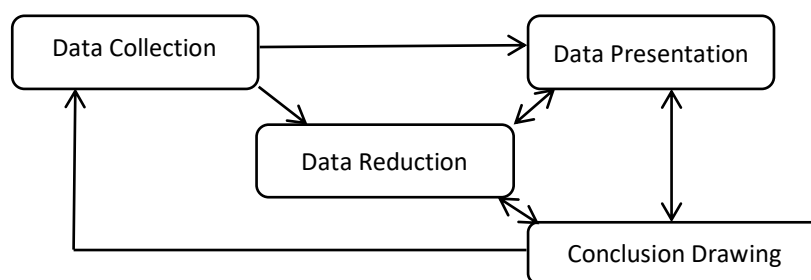
$$\frac{\textit{Guide Score}}{\textit{Maximum Score}} \times 100$$

The researcher divided students into having a problem and not having a problem after learning the test's results and the student's scores using the following modified criteria from Arikunto (2006) in Muhammad et al (Batubara and Mahardhika 2020):

Score  $\leq$  70 = has problem

Score  $\geq$  70 = has no problem

In analyzing the data of questionnaire sheet and interview, researcher analyzed with Miles and Huberman theory. Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2018) argue that the qualitative analysis of data is performed in an interactive way, continuing until it reaches its saturation point. The steps of data analysis for qualitative research are illustrated in the figure below:



Components in Data Analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994)

## Result and Discussion

### *The students' problem in passive based on test*

**Table 4.1 Test findings**

Tense	Categories	Total	Percentage
Simple Present	Has problem	10	90,9%
	Passive	1	9,1%
<b>Total</b>		11	100%
Simple Past	Has problem	7	63,6%
	Passive	4	36,4%
<b>Total</b>		11	100%
Simple Future	Has problem	7	63,6%
	Passive	4	36,4%
<b>Total</b>		11	100%
Present Perfect	Has problem	10	90,9%
	Tense	1	9,1%
<b>Total</b>		11	100%

Criteria has problem and has no problem modified from Arikunto (2006)

Note:

Score  $\leq$  70 = has problem

Score  $\geq$  70 = has no problem

There were still many students who had a problem in comprehending passive voice. Based on the data analysis of the students' result test of the simple present tense, researcher found that the highest score that is achieved by the students in writing passive voice in simple present tense was 80 and the lowest was 0. There were 10 students classified as having problem and there was 1 student classified having no problem. Most students' problem in writing passive voice in simple present tense were the students use the wrong verb which should use verb 3 but use verb 2, for example the correct use is "drawn" but most students use "drew". Students also make mistakes in determining the verb be, the simple present tense should use "is" but many students use "was" which should be for the simple past tense. And then students can't distinguish between regular verbs and irregular verbs, for example most students change the verb "make" to "maked" which should be "made", students think the verb is a regular verb even though "make" is an irregular verb.

Based on the data analysis of the students' result test of the simple past tense, researcher found that the highest score that is achieved by the students in writing

passive voice in simple past tense was 100 and the lowest was 0. There were 7 students classified as having problem and there were 4 students classified having no problem. Most students' problem in writing passive voice in simple past tense was incorrectly use the verb be which is appropriate to the subject, for example the subject "football" should be use verb be "was" but most students use "were".

Based on the data analysis of the students' result test of the simple future tense, researcher found that the highest score that is achieved by the students in writing passive voice in simple future tense was 80 and the lowest was 0. There were 7 students classified as having problem and there were 4 students classified having no problem. Most students' problem in writing passive voice in simple future tense was students cannot distinguish between regular verbs and irregular verbs, for example most students change the verb "make" to "maked" and "buy" to "buyed" which should be "made" and "bought", students think 'make' and 'buy' are regular verb even though these are irregular verb.

Based on the data analysis of the students' result test of the present perfect tense, researcher found that the highest score that is achieved by the students in writing passive voice in present perfect tense was 80 and the lowest was 0. There were 10 students classified as having problem and there was 1 student classified having no problem. Almost all of the students also make mistakes in determining the verb be, students cannot distinguish between the verb be in each of them, for example most students use 'have been' in singular subjects which should use 'has been'.

***The students' problem in passive voice based on questionnaire and interview***

**Table 1. The Distribution of the Questionnaire (adopted Diana, 2009)**

NO	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Percentage
1	I have difficulty identifying the subject and the object in passive sentences	0%	0%	73%	27%	0%
2	I have difficulty changing subject pronouns to object pronouns	0%	18%	63%	18%	18%
3	I sometimes forget to add the verb be in passive voice	0%	36%	54%	9%	36%
4	I have difficulty adjusting the verb be according to the subject (singular and plural)	18%	72%	9%	0%	90%
5	I have difficulty adjusting verb be according to the tense	0%	27%	72%	0%	27%
6	I can't determine past tense (V2) and past participle	0%	72%	18%	9%	72%
7	I can't distinguish regular verbs and irregular verbs	9%	27%	54%	9%	36%
8	I have difficulty changing active to passive sentence	0%	18%	63%	18%	18%
9	I have difficulty writing vocabulary in English so I need a dictionary	18%	72%	0%	9%	90%

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the researcher can conclude that there are several reasons for students' problems in comprehending passive voice and there are based on the largest order:

I have difficulty adjusting the verb be according to the subject (singular and plural) (90%), this statement is supported by the students' answer who are still confused about using 'was' and 'were' and 'has been' and 'have been' and also this statement is supported by students' answers during interviews who said they had difficulty determining the verb be in each subject because they had not memorized it, such as "yes, I have quite difficult because I haven't memorized it".

I have difficulty writing vocabulary in English so I need a dictionary (90%), This is statement supported by students' answer sheet because there are several vocabulary words written by students but incorrectly, this occurs due to the reduction of letters or the addition of unnecessary letters. This is also based on the results of student interviews where on average the questions were answered because they forgot how to write them so they needed a dictionary.

I can't determine past tense (V2) and past participle (72%), This statement is supported by the students' answer who are still confused about using 'drew' or 'drawn' and also this statement is supported by students' answers during interviews who said they had difficulty distinguish verb 2 and verb 3 because they had not memorized it, such as " I had difficulty distinguishing between V2 and V3 because I didn't memorize it so I had to open a dictionary".

I sometimes forget to add the verb be in passive voice (36%), this can be proven on the students' answer sheet that some students didn't use verb be in the passive sentence.

I can't distinguish regular verbs and irregular verbs (36%), this statement is supported by the students' answer who are still confused about using 'maked' or 'made' and 'buyed' and 'bought', and also this statement is supported by students' answers during interviews who said they had difficulty distinguish regular and irregular verbs, such as " I have difficulty if the verbs used are irregular verbs because they definitely have different forms, if it's regular verbs I can do it because I just add the ending -ed".

I have difficulty adjusting verb be according to the tense (27%), This statement is supported by the students' answer who are still confused about using 'was' and 'is' which are 'was' for simple past tense and 'is' for simple present tense and also this statement is supported by students' answers during interviews who said they had difficulty determining the verb be in each tense because they had not memorized it, such as "yes, I have quite difficult because I haven't memorized it".

I have difficulty changing subject pronouns to object pronouns (18%), this can be proven on the students' answer sheets that the subject 'she' when the object should be 'her' but some students still answer 'she', this is the same as using 'I' and 'me'.

I have difficulty changing active to passive sentence (18%). This statement is supported by students' answer sheet where when students take the test the results of their answers are in the form of simple present tense, not passive voice.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the three instruments used by researcher, namely tests, questionnaires and interviews, researcher concluded that there were three important things that were problems and causes in understanding passive voice. First, difficulty in determining subject and object. Basically, students can determine the subject and object correctly in

passive sentences, but another cause of problems is if the subject or object uses pronouns. Second, difficulty using the auxiliary verb be. This problem is caused by two things, namely the use of the auxiliary verb be according to the subject and tense. Students seem to have difficulty determining whether subjects are singular or plural, so that sometimes they use the verb be incorrectly, and students also have difficulty determining subjects based on tense, namely because there are several tenses in English where the verb be is different, so students often seem to confuse using the verb be from one tense to another. Another cause of problems is that students sometimes forget to add the verb be, so they sometimes skip the verb be and immediately write the past participle (V3). Third, difficulty in distinguishing past form (V2) and past participle (V3), the cause of the problem is because in English verbs are divided into two, namely regular verbs and irregular verbs, regular verbs do not change too much, usually they are only added ending -ed, or -d, while irregular verbs usually have the second form and the third form are very different, the cause of this problem is often a problem for students. Besides that, students sometimes confuse the past form (V2) and past participle (V3) with irregular verbs, for example those who make the most mistakes when using drew and drawn. Another cause of problems is due to students' lack of mastery of vocabulary, so problems like this often occur because students always write words incorrectly in English, the mistakes made are usually due to subtracting letters or adding unnecessary letters.

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