“Passive Voice is Difficult...?”

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Isurupaya, Battaramulla

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Certification
The researcher hereby declare that, this research study is an original work of Ms. K.K. ChamaniRenuka, and the data and findings presented in this report are true and accurate to the best of her knowledge and conscience.

........................................  ..................................................
Signature – Researcher           Signature – Supervisor

Date: ..................................
Acknowledgement

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Heartiest thanks are extended to the 4 mentors for their supervision and guidance given.

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Ms. K. K. Chamani Renuka
Abstract
This study examines into areas such as difficulties encountered by the students to construct the PV sentences and the reasons that made teachers to be reluctant to teach this area thoroughly. Also this study will try to indentify some innovative techniques of putting across this – so called difficult grammatical item into the minds of students, and how far the intervention remedial will work out towards the mastery of Passive construction in a mix- ability group of a junior secondary school.

The methodology consists of three instruments of data collection.
1. Entry & exist behavior tests
2. Questionnaire

The interventions made were- one wrap, and two songs to teach certain grammatical items. Also, remedial teaching was done to show the effect of using the innovative techniques.
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1. **Introduction**

**1.1 Nature of the problem**

Why students show lower achievement level in mastery of passive voice sentences?

What are the reasons for teachers to find it difficult, to teach passive construction for secondary level students?

Is it due to:

- The method of presentation in text books
- The teacher participation / teacher beliefs
- Insufficient (simple &innovative) techniques
- Lack of students concentration/ interest
- Any other reason

What are the existing patterns of Passive Voice usage?

What are the specific areas of weaknesses and strengths emerge from the patterns that need to be considered in the intervention?

What is the most suitable action plan and what are the action steps?

**1.2 Background of the problems**

Passive is considered to be one of the difficult areas of mastery. Since it involves a couple of combinations to work out prior to the actual construction, knowledge of other two areas are similarly important to be mastered beforehand. (‘Be’ verb+ participle)

This puts the students in difficulty as it requires higher order skills such as synthesis. This puts the teachers also to aside, to do away with teaching of those areas. Students need the concentration power, thorough knowledge of ‘Be’ verb and participle – both regular and ire-regular forms, experience of synthesizing the correct forms together and building up the correct verb required. Therefore, Passive construction is comparatively a complex process.

This difficulty is crucial when the students are also of a poor performance level. Yet, the second language teachers cannot do away with this grammar item, since it is an indispensable part in un- intentional speaking. For example, even in L1 an individual might require passive voice to report certain instances.

Eg:- What happened there?

“tea given, food is given, it was decorated...etc.”

This is the same in L2 as well. Children of government schools (although they are being taught English from grade 3 to 13 with a compulsory-set syllabus) are not brought up in a setting such as to use it unintentionally in their spoken form. As previous research suggests, it cannot be given to a set of students who rarely get the chance of speaking in day to day life or hardly hear English other than their teacher-speaking in the class-
Passive Voice

room. (This is also minimized if the teacher uses the MT to explain) Having accounted the above rationale, researcher identifies this as an area worth investigating.

**1.3 The importance of researching and finding solutions for the problem.**

It’s important researching on this area since it’s set aside by many in the field. This area is little bit boring, difficult and uninteresting unless it is given in an interesting manner.

It’s worth finding solutions for the target group, since they quickly will quit the grammar part otherwise. This set of students is common in every school, regardless of the urban – rural differences. Dis-oriented nature, carelessness and quick absorption to vulnerabilities in the society is a common sight in modern teenage groups. Therefore, researcher believes that she can generalize her findings to the field of ELT, since a group exists that should be addressed this way, throughout the country.

Researcher believers the great importance of such a finding to all in the field of ELT, concerning the implications it can bring in improving the education practice.

School will also be benefitted, since mastery of a difficult grammar point will raise the students’ performance level and thus increase the overall results in the school.
2. Methodology

2.1 Objectives
At the end of this research study, the students will be able to, master the construct of passive voice sentences.

2.2 Sample
The context of the research is 15 students of grade 10, consists of multiple variable groups of both male and female students from lower middle class families in a developing secondary school.

Setting
The secondary school in which the research will be carried out is a “selected” one. It is “selected” in two facets. One is, there are 4 major schools that surround the school within the catchment area, competing to lure students for attendance. (Both admission for, grade 1 and regular attendance without dropouts.) Other schools are well reputed, recognized (by name) and sophisticated with human and physical resources; so that the school needs programs to capture the interest of its ‘customers’. The other is, most of the students are from broken families. Either they are unloved, isolated or left-out by parents. Often it is, single parent families, which the surviving parent also has no care, no time or no love to be given to them. Instead, they go in search of money, food, or sex for their survival. Almost all the students are from families of ‘economically not sound’.

A majority of (11/15) (73%) this set of students, is also poor in performance for other subjects, as well. (Subjects required higher order skills like, Maths, Science, and Sinhala Literature appreciation.)

The school was selected in another facet. This was a school at the verge of closure during the time of Tsunami. This was the major reason for lesser number of students in the upper classes. Since it was amalgamated to the nearby school during the time Tsunami hit the country and was taken into a refugee camp, the student population has decreased.

Although, it was re-opened the student population remained static. The remaining set of students was, as mentioned above. It took time and demanded programs to develop the status and the reputation of the school again. Although, the primary level student population is of a commendable state, still the damaged reputation inhibits the school admission rate. (Presently,(2013) a drastic development has taken place in the physical environment & has increased the educational status of the school, developing further under the “child friendly schools” project (2014). Now, the school admission is overwhelming.)

Reasons for selecting the population:
Passive Voice

- This is the period of adolescent so that they like to explore things of their own and are willing to take challenges.
- This is a period in which the school presents ample opportunities for students to develop their personality traits.
- By this age limit, the mastery of other grammatical forms have taken place & they are quite competent of grasping the complex structures such as passive.

2.3 Action Research

2.3.1 Why – an Action research

In the vision, the Sri Lanka to be English, as a “Lingua- Franca” is given prominence. Developing competencies in the mastery of a second language is therefore, important. Speaking will be given a prime concern from 2015 onwards. As mentioned before “passive construction “ is an indispensable part in un- intentional speaking. As this was the state of English required for the preparation of students for tomorrow, this type of novel investigations are worth considering “ Child Friendly learning atmosphere” is also one of the key issues addressed in the recent curriculum revision. As Sri Lanka is oriented towards the “Wonder of Asia” research studies will pave way to much of the innovations in the field of education. Without a scientific study of the concern, no one will accept the findings and no one can generalize the findings.

Hence, researcher best selected “Action research” mode as the solution to her concern. It allows “Action” to change both, the research subjects and the researcher. It also allows room for further investigation or development by future researchers, unlike in any other mode.

2.3.2 Action Research Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
<th>Teacher Action</th>
<th>Students’ Action</th>
<th>Time Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To reflect upon the students initial comments</td>
<td>Collects their free and open comments</td>
<td>Writes freer and open expressions.</td>
<td>20 minutes 2013.09.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To identify the present level of mastery.</td>
<td>Designs and administers an “entry behavior test”</td>
<td>Sits for the test and shows their present ability</td>
<td>40 minutes 2013.09.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To introduce passive construction in a simpler manner (supported by MT)</td>
<td>Uses a simpler method (a mechanical construction method only) to construct PV sentences(Intervention I)</td>
<td>Constructs sentences</td>
<td>80 minutes 2013.09.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To make them familiarize of PV usage</td>
<td>Presents PV sentences to identify “doer” “verb” and the “agent” (Intervention II)</td>
<td>Answers identifying the expected components of PV</td>
<td>23.09.2013 04.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To let the students learn PV construction supported by interesting songs</td>
<td>Introduces 2 songs and the wrap to construct PV. (Intervention III)</td>
<td>Learns and remembers the two songs and the wrap.</td>
<td>60 minutes 29.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To identify the latest level of mastery after the interventions</td>
<td>Prepares an exit behavior test</td>
<td>Faces the test and shows their level of mastery.</td>
<td>60 minutes 12.11.2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Action Research Implementation

a. Effectiveness of the AR.
Researcher planned all her steps in the AR with her students and according to their choice and wish. (The time to do the activities, length of the tasks etc.)

The specific objective was achieved to a greater sense. As shown in the following table, the percentage of success increased in 27%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Entry B. test</th>
<th>Exit B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of students attempted</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of students got Correct sentences</td>
<td>02 15.38%</td>
<td>06 42.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of students not attempted, Got all incorrect sentences</td>
<td>11 84.61%</td>
<td>08 57.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference between the Number of students who got correct sentences in entry test and exit test is 27.47%. Interestingly, It is the same between the failure rate as well.
Certain observations, the researcher made as evidence to this success while planning were reported in the “Reflective Journal”

4.10.2013 Page 13

“Their comments were extremely positive, encouraging and motivating. They were happy to experience success. Once they got the bigger ticks, “Good” sealed in books and marks in their books, They were proud of themselves. They’ve said, “What else do we need other than this in the world. That was their ultimate bliss”

Certain reflections made on planning were also recorded in the reflective Journal

4.10.2013 Page 14

“Yet, I thought the task was too easy, that I wanted, to let them, experience the success. Expected thing happened. (+) reinforcement have worked-out “

As a result of this research study certain developments took place in students.

1. Students who believed passive as difficult before found it much easier later.

2. Students who did not liked the subject before, started loving it.
Passive Voice

Some said—English wasn’t their favourite before but that they develop interest towards learning it now. They’ve given the bulk of it to my dedication & commitment. Some wrote, “They counted everything in a fun-filled setting and, who asked us subjects said, they wanted to learn more.”

“Teacher is taught—this is really a novembre. But, since you taught us in a play-way, I feel it like a game.”

“So you teach it this way who cannot learn it well!?”

Teacher is taught passive. But, now I feel a genuine interest in me.

Passive should be given like Santa—wrapped with full of fun. That was their overall comment. Were the texts given a chance to do so? was the texts considered as special as Santa? Have anyone tried to do so... were they not laughed at?

Who can I give them passive as today as it could be?
Passive Voice

Certain developments took place in the researcher as well. Her professionalism grew into a much matured state.

- I was bit disappointed.... I felt sorry.
- I made up my mind, it's better to do something than never.
- Will this effort work –out?
- Is it worth trying these methods?
- Common comment is that, “No need of even trying- out things with these vulnerable types of sts. True, yet I thought it’s better to light a candle than cursing to the darkness!

The effectiveness of the AR was strengthened by the researcher of her achievements.

- Noticed a growing enthusiasm in them. They wore a smiling face, while doing the activity.
- I taught “passive construction” simultaneously to other two classes- grade 9 and 8. Both those classes also showed a great success. I was happy, that some got many correct, even at the first attempt.
- Who sees these great achievements? These little gains...!

3.2 Implementation of AR
1. Brief Introduction and initial awareness made to students.

Students’ participation was rich, irrespective of the (+)/(-)ness in those, they responded quickly. The awareness made was at a greater level to researcher’s concern. Because 9/11-81.81% has given positive comments in supportive of the programme. Even the 2/11 18.18% made that comment due to their immaturity and ignorance.
Initially, I gave a brief introduction of the programme I'm going to do to my R. subjects. They made several comments, verbal & non- verbal. For some it was difficult from the very outset. Someone seemed to have no idea at all - not knowing what this passive is all about.

Student SD gave a nice comment to others. "Yes, we can learn a lot to act... you can be stars yes, yes, you all can practise acting like stars... ah... ha..."

"How proud are we, when the CD is circulated around the country — anyway, it's going to be nice."

Out of the 11 sets who were present — 7 have given positive comments, in support of the programme. Two have given a negative connotation — "although it's going to be a nice job, I don't like," one has said. The other, always negative and reluctant to studies - but preferred idling or sleeping. Or just wasting the time — said: "Oh, this is really a nuisance. None sense! I can't. I'll go home— without staying."

"These were due to total ignorance. My set of sis are from the most desperate family statuses. The only thing they reject is the education. There is no thirst for learning. As I've pointed out. Clearly in my R. background this set of sis do not need to enjoy the pleasure of learning/studies. Instead, they need something for their stomach — idle sleep & have fun. What are we trying? Does the anumerous innovations that we find have any value, if we really cannot get results out of those? What is lacking behind? What should be improved — socio-economic background, awareness or the need to continue studies?"
2. **Entry behavior Test.**

As stated in (3.1) the test showed the anticipated results. Only 2/13 got at least one sentence correct. (15.38%)

“That was a very good feedback to start-with. ... since majority have attempted, that was “Something” for the researcher to be satisfied” (Ref Jour P.5)

3. **Intervention 1: use of a simpler method using MT.**

Student participation is positive. Only 8 girls were there, 7 from grade 10 and one from grade 11. Their comments were developmental, positive and enthusiastic.

4. **Intervention II**

**Identifying passive sentences.**

It was the most successful activity. In this activity the students experienced success. Task one 7/11 63.63% got at least 4/5 correct sentences out of the 5 given. Task two 4/7 57.14% got at least 7/8 correct sentences out of the 8 given. This was a happier experience for the students.
Passive Voice

Really the Activity was so Fun. I was so Happy. Please tell the students
Thanks Teacher. I think this was fun and I was so Happy. Please say the Activity was
really good.
The reason for this success is the reinforcement given to them by bigger tick marks and “good” written on their papers.

5. **Intervention III : Introduce songs and the wrap**

Introduction of 2 songs and the wrap was a successful activity. Students wrote the lyrics and sang the songs, with pleasure.

**Piloted Intervention**

Tried out one song to perform on the stage on “the world children’s’ day” programme. Although, it was an overall success had its failures.
Passive Voice

The researcher could have made it successful, if choreography and music support was given. Further, practice time and time to memorize the lyrics should also have been given.

6. **Exit Behavior Test**
   After another series of remedial teaching regarding P. construction, researcher administered the test.

   As stated in (3.1), the results were sound. 6/14, 42.85% got more than 10 sentences correct out of the 15 given. This was a comprehensive result for the researcher, since it had made a change in the research subjects.
3.3 Analysis of Success

On the part of the objectives of the research, it is observable that students have mastered the passive construction to a greater extent. (27%)

On the part of student participation their involvement has increased.

![Figure 1: Student Participation](image1)

![Figure 2: Student Participation](image2)
Passive Voice

This is all evident by their comments and the willingness shown to participate (Appendix 3.1)

Although, the whole process of the research was a successful attempt to a certain level the aim of producing a CD using the innovative songs and some other songs couldn’t meet its’ ends.

This is due to,

1. Time limitation
2. Non availability of Infrastructure Facilities (Proper Cameras, Videography, Music, Costumes etc.)
3. Insufficient funds.
4. Guidance and collaborative support by the relevant authorities and contemporaries
4. Recommendations and Suggestions.
Researcher wishes to put forward certain recommendations to the field of ELT.

1. Modern day students are drastically changed due to the changes that take place in the society. What teachers can do to bridge the gap is to go to their level and their taste, without cursing to the generation gap.
2. Unless we understand and touch their taste we will be ever rejected.
3. Teachers need to develop their professional practice thorough reflections- that occurs constantly within their CR

Also researcher wishes to suggest that this topic needs further research, provided the support and guidance is given researcher could produce the CD which will be an extra facilitation to the teachers of English and the students of SL.

This type of novelties should be given due recognition and appreciation, considering the most undesirable set of students.
5. Appendix

1. Remedial Teaching
   1.1. Food chains
   1.2. PV put into other tenses
   1.3.
2. Comments
   2.1. Interest shown
   2.2. Positive attitudes developed

3. Questionnaire administered to teachers

4. Interventions
   4.1. The Wrap
   4.2. Song 1
   4.3. Song 2
Passive Voice

- Frog is eaten by the snake.
- Frog was eaten by the snake.
- Frog will be eaten by the snake.
- Frog will have been eaten by the snake.

- Grass Hopper is eaten by the frog.
- Grass Hopper was eaten by the frog.
- Grass Hopper will be eaten by the frog.
- Grass Hopper will have been eaten by the frog.

- Snake is eaten by the Eagle.
- Snake was eaten by the Eagle.
- Snake will be eaten by the Eagle.
- Snake will have been eaten by the Eagle.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Active voice</th>
<th>Passive voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>am given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>gives</td>
<td>is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present continuous</td>
<td>am giving</td>
<td>am being given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>is giving</td>
<td>is &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are giving</td>
<td>are &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>has given</td>
<td>has been given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>have given</td>
<td>have &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple past</td>
<td>gave</td>
<td>was given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>were given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past continuous</td>
<td>was giving</td>
<td>was being given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>were giving</td>
<td>were &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>had given</td>
<td>had been &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrePast</td>
<td></td>
<td>given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple future</td>
<td>will give</td>
<td>will be given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shall give</td>
<td>shall be given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal</td>
<td>can give</td>
<td>can be given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fornus</td>
<td>may give</td>
<td>may &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>must give</td>
<td>must &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Passive Voice

Example sentences:
- Passive voice: The book was read by John.
- Active voice: John read the book.

Practice
- Write a paragraph using passive voice and another using active voice.

Tips:
- Passive voice is commonly used for topics like news reports, textbooks, and academic writing.
- Active voice is more direct and engaging in conversations.

Good luck!
Passive Voice

English

 Passive =  Sentence or Subject

Active Voice: I eat an apple.

Passive Voice: An apple is eaten by me.

English sentence Plz.... please select
K'k Cola  or
English Fanta  EGB  or  Coca-Cola.

9/24/2013

(Handwritten notes and corrections)
2019/09/20

PASSIVE VOICE
KIK COLA

PASSIVE VOICE
FANTA
Passive Voice

Questionnaire.

Do you teach "passive voice" sentences often?
Yes. Not often, but very often.

Do you like to teach that grammar point?
Yes.

How do you find it, presented in the text books?
Give your ideas.

Normally I use my own simple sentence to introduce that grammar point.

Have you tried any new methods to introduce "passive construction"? If yes, what?
Sometimes I use examples from mother tongue and try to compare with the English version, using day to day situations.
Give your ideas freely, regarding teaching of "passive".

I think introducing "passive" is a must.
To teach it, the teacher has to introduce it at the stage of Grade 10. When you express the language you have to use, passive sentences mostly. So it must be taught properly and precisely. Introducing the rules step by step, will be successful.
Passive Voice

**The Wrap**
Passive voice is difficult //
No ........... !
Learn your ‘Be’ verb //
Participle will support you //
Get them both – fix them well //
You get passive, easily
Oh ....yeah ....!

**Song 1**
Ver......b ‘Be’ is
Always makes me try
Oh...Oh...Oh....//
A...m, is, are
Always in present
Oh...Oh...Oh....//
But, ‘Be” as a verb
Can stand alone
Which has its’ own way perform
“Be... careful.
Be honest and kind.
I want be .....a teacher
I will be one day.”
Wa..s, were are
Two forms in the past
Oh...Oh...Oh....//
Been ............... being are
Particiles in same
Oh...Oh...Oh....//
But, will and shall
As verbs can note
What is there to come

**Song 2**
Verbs // Just another fun thing //
Three // tenses are there in a verb //
Present – past & participle
Let’s try // one example.
Go- went & gone
Build // regular like this
Add// ’ed” to the verb
Let’s try // one example.
Deliver – delivered – delivered
Ir- regular but no pattern
“ Change of vowels
Zero change &
T,d,en plus”
Let's try // some examples.
Speak spoke spoken.
Take took taken.
Steal stole stolen
Shake shook shaken
See // how fun it is
Will try // to master it!

(Two songs are according to the tunes – much familiar English Songs (1) Sad movies always makes me, cry .... (2) Girls just to wanna have fun .....)