

Comprehending Agent and Agentless Types of English Active and Passive Voice by Indonesian Learners of English

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ABSTRACT

The study entitled “Comprehending Agent and Agentless Types of English Active and Passive Voice by Indonesian Learners of English” aims to analyze and describe how Indonesians as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive sentences, and to uncover the factors affecting comprehension. The participants of the study were 26 university students from a grammar class of 2015. The two main instruments used were an individual test and a set of questionnaires for personal information. Participants’ performances in the test regarding the agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices were correlated with their personal data which contain aspects affecting their learning of second language. The mean score and percentage of individual result of the test were used to determine the sentences that received the highest and the lowest performances. Two major ways were discovered that help participants comprehend those types of active and passive voices, namely identifying the items in sentences and selecting explicit choices. L1 interference is shown to have significant relations to the participants’ comprehension of agent and agentless types of English active and passive sentences, especially the interference in the structure of sentences and grammatical error. In addition to L1 interference, the factors that were taken into account to contribute to the comprehension, were individual differences. The findings of this study were assessed by using appropriate and relevant linguistic theories.

Keywords: *Second language learning, agent and agentless types of active and passive voice, L1 interference, Individual differences*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, people have tried to master more than one language due to their needs; thus, the studies on Second Language Learning (SLL) have expanded (Montero, et al. 2014; Stefánsson, 2013; Latu, 1994; Troike, 2006; Moeller, 2015; Pica, 2005). For example, Walqui (2000) examines how contextual factors such as individual, social and societal factors, affect the process of learning second language. The study reveals that the significant factors come from the individual, which is students' level of proficiency and linguistic distance. Walqui also emphasizes that larger social and cultural contexts of second language development give a considerable impact on second language learning, especially for immigrant students. This present study uses the term second language that refers to English being learnt by Indonesian learners; although English is not acknowledged as a second language by Indonesian speakers, the term second language does not only include the language after first language, it also includes languages

such as the third, the fourth or even foreign languages (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Moreover, Troike (2006) often refers second language as a target language; it is not only one language after first language, but also the term is applicable to the third or fourth languages being learned. Moreover, Troike also defines second language as typically a language that is necessary for education, employment and other purposes. In addition, several experts also contribute to the definition of second language; they state that second language is the languages besides learners' "native language" or "mother tongue" (Mitchell and Myles, 2004; Bhela, 1999). Referring to those underlying theories; therefore, the term English as second language is largely used in this present study.

Even though the studies in the notion of second language learning have been considerably conducted; the difficulty among people in mastering L2 still becomes an essential issue in the study of language. There are several aspects which lead to the difficulty in learning English as second language, those aspects are: grammar,

lexical, pronunciation, word order, sentence structure (Geertzen, et al. 2012; Maisarah, n.d). One of the prominent issues that many researchers are concerned with is active and passive voice; since many researchers consider that passive voice is the thorniest problem in L2 grammar when it comes to teach and to learn; furthermore, the notion of active and passive voice is somewhat inseparable, especially when passive is a derivation of active voice; therefore, active and passive voices are worth investigating (Hinkle, 2002; Tanko, 2010).

Studies in the field of active and passive voices have gained significance considerably since the SLL studies begin inception. Active and passive voice sentences are frequently used in the study of second language in order to compare which sentence is more difficult to learn in the second language (Bhela, 1999; Stefánsson, 2013). Although the studies of active and passive sentences have widely been involved in the study of SLL by many researchers, there are still limited numbers of studies in Indonesian language. The common

issues of active and passive voice studies are passive voice sentences are more difficult to learn in second language. Hinkle (2002) has conducted research on discovering why English passive is difficult to teach and to learn; the study reveals that the difficulty confronted by L2 learners of English is caused by the different instruction of their languages; meaning that L1 interferes with L2.

Several previous studies of English active and passive voices in second language learning reveal many interesting data on learners' tendency to hardly associate with the use of passive and inanimate active sentences (Master, 1991; Pfaff, 1987; Bates, et al. 1982; Roe, 2016; Larsen-freeman & Long, 1991; Dabrowska & Street, 2006). Roe (2016) states that a noticeable difference among English and other languages in the use of passive is, English speakers commonly use the agentless passive than the agent one. This difference somehow leads to the problem that is confronted by the learners in identifying passive voice; since Roe emphasizes that the way learners discover passive structure

in the text is by focusing on identifying preposition 'by' as an indication to passive voice; thus, the English learners tend to be more familiar to agent passive structures. Moreover, Suprato (2012) in the result of contrastive analysis between English passive and bahasa Indonesia, discovers that although in general English passive voice considerably emphasizes only *to be + past participle* in its structure; the other items in passive with expressed agent help participants to comprehend this type of passive. The preposition 'by', and the past participle verb are the items that essentially indicate passive sentences with expressed agent; the other two items in the sentences are: subject, and object. In fact, those sorts of items are essential in formulating Indonesian passive sentences; Alwi (1998) points out that subject, object and preposition "by" are important elements to indicate passive sentences, and Indonesian passive voice largely includes subject and object in nearly all formation of passive.

Another appropriate starting point for a discussion of second

language learning is known as the factors affecting second language learning. According to Spolsky (1989), the most significant factor is the relationship between contextual factors, individual differences, learning opportunities, and learning outcome (Spolsky, 1989). Moreover, individual differences have become the most consistent variable in second language learning; the aspects that are largely considered as the essential variables are: language aptitude and motivation (Dornyei & Skehan, 2003 as cited in Doughty & Long, 2005). A recent study discovers that, motivated students study in regular and productive ways to take every chance to perfect their language skills. Moreover, the findings enrich the significance of learners' motivation and attitudes in L2 study (Ushida, 2005).

However, the notion of agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices, which involves Indonesians as English learners, is not yet studied by many researchers, particularly in Indonesia. Moreover, these agent and agentless types will

enrich the study of active and passive voices in the area of second language learning. Therefore, this study present study will improve our understanding on classifying which type of passive that is difficult to learn.

These previous investigations have provided the impetus for this recent study. As already observed with the Japanese students who learn active and passive sentences (Master, 1991); the Asian speakers in this present study, in particular Indonesian, will have such difficulty dealing with English active-passive sentences especially in the notion of agentless type. In this present study, all of the participants are studying English as second language in the formal classroom but also they have various degrees of informal exposure to the second language; different aspects that influence second language learning will be further analyzed in this study. This research will be undertaken in two ways: First, the learners' comprehension of agent and agentless of English active and passive sentences will be traced on three parts of question sections in accordance to

agent and agentless materials; second, examine the factors affecting comprehension.

This present study attempts to fill the gap by investigating the agent and agentless types of English active and passive voice and discovering the different features of passive in their L1 and L2 as reported by Roe (2016), Alwi (1998) and Master (1991).

The Concepts of Language Learning

Issue in language learning is mostly related to the issue of language acquisition. This occurs due to the two notions have several things in common, significantly in the factors that influence the phenomena (Ghazali, 2006). However, several experts have demonstrated that the two fields of studies have different foci regardless of their interrelation in certain aspects.

The concepts that can be utilized to distinguish language learning and language acquisition are the terms consciousness and unconsciousness. Mitchell and Myles (2004) define the terms of acquisition and learning oppose to each other, they

demonstrate that the term acquisition is brought to imply the involvement of innate, specific-linguistic knowledge in a person's mastery of language. In addition, Mitchell and Myles (2004) emphasize that the term acquisition implies some types of subconscious, effortless assimilation of linguistic knowledge. Accordingly, it is more frequent that the term acquisition is applied to the children's mastery of first language rather than the adult's mastery of second language.

Furthermore, Mitchell and Myles (2004) provide the definition of learning to clearly differentiate those two key concepts; they mention that language learning involves both explicit and implicit psychological processes.

a. Explicit learning

"The learners will be consciously aware that they modify their knowledge base (Mitchell and Myles, 2004 pp. 6-7)."

b. Implicit learning

"There will be a change in the learner's knowledge base but this will be outside their conscious

introspection (Mitchell and Myles, 2004 pp. 6-7)".

Mitchell and Myles (2004) also point out that learning involves the notion of formality and informality. These registers refer to the same terms as explicit and implicit, formal learning refers to the conscious learning (explicit learning), while informal learning refers to unconscious learning (implicit learning).

Second Language Learning

Second language learning is closely related to either the study of first language acquisition or second language acquisition (Term & Anderson, 2007). Second language, according to Troike (2006), is often referred as a target language; it is not only one language after first language, but also the term is applicable to the third or fourth languages being learned. Moreover, Troike also defines second language as typically an official language that is necessary for education, employment and other basic purposes. In addition, several experts also contribute to the definition of second language; they state that

second language is the languages beside learners' "native language" or "mother tongue" (Mitchell and Myles, 2004; Bhela, 1999).

Second language learning as defined by Mitchell and Myles (2004) is the learning of any language in any level but this learning of 'second' language takes later than acquiring first language. Mitchell and Myles (2004) demonstrate that 'foreign language' is also classified under the general term of second language; they also justify such statement by emphasizing both local and remote languages. They believe that the underlying learning process is crucially the same for both types of languages, regardless of different learning purposes and circumstances. Furthermore, language learning is supposed to be helped by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules (Seliger, et al. 1975 as cited in Krashen, 1981).

However, to learn second language is not an easy thing to attempt, there is always obstacle in the first place. As stated in contrastive hypothesis proposed by Lado (1957);

he suggests that the learners undergo the difficulty of learning other languages when their L1 and L2 (the second language that they learn) differ. Eckman (1977) agrees to the previous theory by stating, the more different a feature is in a certain language the more intricate it shall be learnt. Essential factors that influence second language learning will further explain below, these factors are proposed by Spolsky (1989).

Factors Affecting the Learning of Second Language

Factors that are believed to significantly influence the process of second language learning are proposed by Spolsky (1989, pp. 16-25); Spolsky classifies the factors into several parts, which are: contextual factors, individual differences, learning opportunities and learning outcomes (Spolsky, 1989 as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

a. L1 Interference

In SLL literature, a number of studies mention that L1 interference plays significant role in second-language learning (Master, 1991; Pfaff, 1987;

Bates, et al. 1982). Learning second language is not an easy thing to do; the process certainly undergoes difficulty, one of the most influential problems is the interference of first language (L1) (Master, 1991; Pfaff, 1987; Bates, et al. 1982). According to Sinha et al. (2009), many linguistic terminologies refer to the first language such as native language, mother tongue and primary language. They also describe first language (L1) as a language which is acquired in early childhood; it starts before the age of around three. Dulay et al. (1982) point out that first language is a considerable issue of second language due to its interference. Interference is described as either conscious or automatic transfer owing to speakers' habit of their first language's structure onto the target language (Dulay, et al. 1982). Additionally, interference is viewed as the error that learners produce in applying second language and it can be observed back to the first language (Lott, 1983 as cited in Bhela, 1999). Moreover, Ellis (1986) defines interference as the influence that the

learner's first language is utilized in learning second language.

Many L2 learners are still struggling to understand one linguistic feature in target language due to the differences between languages being learned. The contrastive hypothesis referring to L1 interference has been proven by several researchers such as Master (1991); he investigates Japanese-native speakers who learn English active and passive sentences. He mentions that Non-native speakers, particularly Japanese-native speakers, need to be explicitly taught regarding English active and passive constructions; he also adds that most of the speakers of Asian languages are confronted with the difficulty of active verbs with inanimate subject noun.

b. Aptitude

The major claim that defines language aptitude is proposed by Carroll (1973); he defines aptitude as a specific talent owned by learners, specifically the ability towards linguistic features of certain language. This individual aptitude is somehow led by exposure to the second language; either the experiences of studying languages or

the age of learners are interrelated to shape the aptitude towards target language. Many studies discuss individual differences as one of major factors in SLL; Larsen-freeman & Long (1991) in their book state that adult has more advantage when learning second language than children, particularly in grammar. However, the children are also able to overtake the ability when they get enough exposure to the L2. Thus, Larsen & Long's point of view is more concerned about the learners' experience to the target language than to the factor of age, this present study also believes that age is perhaps not as influential as learners' exposure towards second language.

c. Motivation

In addition to aptitude that becomes the major influence of this study; According to Gardner (1985), another factor comes from the social-psychological or attitudinal influences such as: Participants' educational background, country of origin, the reason(s) for enrolling into a certain major of study, and other variables include to measure social-

psychological aspects. Social-psychological aspects in SLL interrelate with participants' motivation to learn second language (Gardner, 1985). Moghadam and Tajeddin (2012) have investigated that individual motivation in learning language is one of the important aspects. Several studies suggest that learners who attempt to integrate the target culture, they are usually easy to motivate and more competent to the target language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972 as cited in Ehrman, et al. 2003).

This present study focuses on several of selected factors that influence the second language learning, as follows: L1 interferences (First language interference), Individual differences (aptitude), Learning opportunities (explicit learning/formal), and contextual factors.

METHODOLOGY

It uses this method with the use of quantitative data in order to achieve conclusion (Hesse & Biber, 2010). The present study attempts to explore the individual differences of students in English department in terms of

grammatical sensitivity; comprehension, and determines the factor affecting comprehension. Additionally, it determines the significant differences on comprehending English active and passive (agent and agentless) sentences among the students.

The data for this study are obtained from two main sources: Test results of students' performance on English active and passive (agent and agentless) sentences and data of students' information that cover the necessary variables such as grammar score, first language and setting of learning opportunities. The participants of this study are 26 university students from English department of Indonesian University of Education, 2A class. This study utilizes three research instruments, as follows: Short story, Administrative questions, and Individual test.

The data analysis procedures of the present study include identifying, classifying, calculating, interpreting. the columns of selected personal information such as: grammar score, TOEFL score and the settings the

participants use English are juxtaposed with the scores of each part of the tests. These steps are implemented in order to easily discover the correlation among those mentioned variables. Since this study is aimed to investigate how the second language learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive voice, those aforementioned scores are required in order to see whether or not an aptitude (grammatical sensitivity) of individuals influences learning second language. Furthermore, the column of where they using English, it indicates learning opportunities (settings of learning). In calculating the data, this study employs a simple statistical formula to discover the average of the score. This study utilizes the formula by Kranzler and Moursund (1999), the formula applied in this study is the mean score; according to Kranzler and Moursund (1999), the mean is the most used formula to measure the central tendency.

$$M_x = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

FINDINGS

The findings of this study are presented below. The findings reveal the ways learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices and the factors affect the comprehension.

Identifying Items in Sentences

Two major ways are discovered in how learners comprehend active and passive with expressed agent, as follows:

- a. By identifying items in sentences
- b. By selecting explicit choices

Figure 4.1 shows the sentences that attain high performances from participants. 85% to 92.31% participants or exactly 22 to 24 participants give a correct answer on each of sentences given. They successfully identify the sentences by matching them with the given types of sentences. A ‘v’ denotes a correct response made with the specific type.

Sentences	Part 1				Frequency
	Passive		Active		
	With expr	Without	With expr	Without expr	
The hut had been built in the woods by Deenu.	v				23
The fish is asked the same question by Deenu.	v				24
Deenu is given satisfaction by the answer	v				22
With the milk that the cows gave, the money is easily earned	v				22
Cows were fed well by Deenu	v				22

Figure 4.1 The sentences with high performance

Furthermore, the sentences that obtain high performance, share the same items. Those sentences include items such as: subject, to be, past participle, object, and preposition by. For more concrete explanation, see figure 4.2 below.

Sentences	Characteristics						
	Passive						
	S	To be	past participle	O	by prep	Agent	Agentless
The hut had been built in the woods by Deenu.	v	v	v	v	v	v	
The fish is asked the same question by Deenu.	v	v	v	v	v	v	
Deenu is given satisfaction by the answer	v	v	v	v	v	v	
With the milk that the cows gave, the money is easily earned	v	v	v	v	v	v	
Cows were fed well by Deenu	v	v	v	v	v	v	
The snake was killed with a stick by somebody	v	v	v	v	v	v	
You will be given a ticket by manager	v	v	v	v	v	v	

Figure 4.2 Shared items in passive sentences

Figure 4.2 reveals passive sentences, that are easily recognized, include the items such as: subject, to be, past participle, object, by. Those aforementioned items are largely utilized by participants to identify passive sentences with expressed agent.

Figure 4.3 uncovers active sentences that receive high performance from participants. 85%

participants give a correct answer on each sentence. These active sentences also share the same items, which consist of subject, verb, object, and identified as active with expressed agent. Figure 4.3 also emphasizes active sentences that are easily understood by learners and considerably attain correct answers, are those having structure such as S+V+O+Adverb. Although the sentences contain different tenses, the participants can still identify them correctly. Thus, this revelation also signifies that participants have understood the present, present continuous and past tenses.

Sentences	Characteristics				
	Active				
	S	V	O	Agent	Agentless
the chef is preparing the best souffle I have ever tasted	v	v	v	v	
Sombody stole my pen yesterday	v	v	v	v	
Sombody killed the snake with a stick	v	v	v	v	

Figure 4.3 Active sentences with high performance

Selecting Explicit Choices

After identifying items in sentences, the second way of how Indonesians as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive voice is by selecting explicit choices. This

second way of comprehending largely relates to the types of questions given. Question part I instructs the participants to match the sentences with the types given which. Participants are only allowed to match a sentence with one type that best describes the sentence; question part II asks the participants to fill the gap in the sentences by selecting one of the best answers. However, question III asks participants to change active into passive sentences and vice versa, and the result shows significant differences. Participants give high performance in the question I and question II; on the other hand, the lowest performance given by participants is in the question part III. A concrete distribution of performance of each part is illustrated in the figure 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6.

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of scores in Part I performance. Most of the participants, (92.31%) attain a score of more than 50% in the part 1, and few participants (7,69%) attain a score of less than 50%. The highest score attained is 100%, which has 25 correct answers of

25 questions as a whole, and the lowest is 36%, which has only 9 correct answers of the whole questions given.

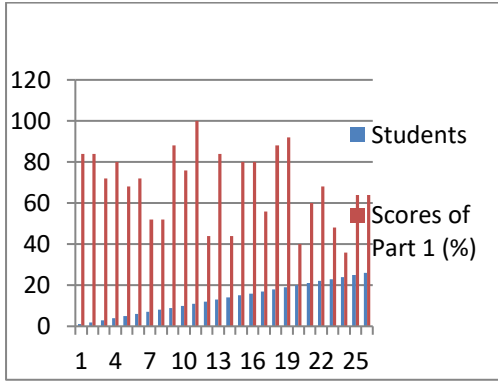


Figure 4.4 Performance of Part I

Figure 4.5 reveals a high performance in the distribution of scores in part II. All of the participants in the sample, 96.15% attain a score more than 50% and only 3.85% attain a score of less than 50%. The highest score attained is 100% and the lowest score attained is 45%.

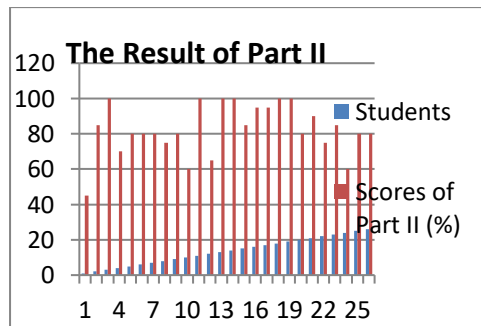


Figure 4.5 Performance of part II

However, figure 4.7 reveals a low performance in the distribution of scores in part III. Of all the participants in the sample, 65.38% participants obtain a score that is less than 50% and only 34.62% attain a score of 50% or more. The highest score attained is 95% and the lowest is 5%.

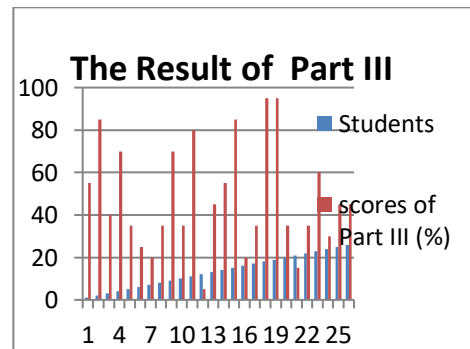


Figure 4.6 Performance of part III

Figure 4.7 shows the sentences of part II that attain the highest number of correct answers; certain sentences receive a perfect score, which means the whole participants respond correctly. Differently, the sentences, that receive high performance in part

II, obtain the lowest performance in part III (see figure 4.8).

Sentences	Frequency
The problem to the children. (explained / is explained)	26
Those pyramids..... around 400 AD. (built / were built)	25
Smoking in the kitchen..... (is not permitted / permitted)	26
Passengers ...to book their tickets early (were advised/ advised)	25
People ...to park in front of their gate (allowed/ were not allowed)	24
Parking in front of their gate.... (is not allowed , has allowed)	26

Figure 4.7 Sentences with high performance in part II

Former sentences	Current sentences
Early booking is advised.	It is advised to early booking
Parking in front of their gate is not allowed	It is not allowed to park in front of their gate
Consulting a good doctor is advised	It is advised to consult a good doctor

Figure 4.8 Sentences with low performance in part III

The sentences in both parts are mostly passive without expressed agent; however, those sentences receive different score. For Example (sentences are taken from faculty.mu.edu):

- a. “Parking in front of their gate (**is not allowed, has allowed**)” (part II)
- b. “Parking in front of their gate is not allowed” becomes “**It is not allowed** to park in front of their gate” (part III)

The sentences above appear in both parts with different instruction. In part II, the sentences without expressed agent receive consistently a high performance of participants, 92.31% to 100% participants select a

correct answer to perfect the sentences given. It shows that selecting explicit choice in the test, it helps participants to identify the correct answer. In addition to identifying, understanding the meaning of the sentences is somewhat involved in the way they comprehend such questions.

In contrast, the sentences without expressed agent persistently obtain a low performance of participants in part III. In part III, participants are asked to change active into passive voice and vice versa; in this part, participants are not given an explicit choice to answer, but they make their own. This part also reveals interesting data that emphasize the participants’ ability to form sentences. Instead of changing the passive sentences into active, participants keep the sentences passive, but add the ‘it’ in front of the sentences; furthermore, the data show that participants are confronted with the difficulty to deal with grammatical issue. Thus, selecting explicit choices can contribute to the way learners comprehend active and passive voices

especially in the notion of agent and agentless types.

Factors Affecting the Learning of Second Language

The results of factors effecting second language learning, and characteristics of the performance are revealed not only by the mean score, individual scores but also the correlation between the performances and variables.

L1 Interference

A. The Interference in Structure

The data of this study reveal that interference can either give a positive impact or negative impact. The positive impact occurs when the two languages have similar aspects; the data in the figure 4.9 reveal passive sentences which obtain a high performance from participants, are the passive sentences with expressed agent. Interestingly, these passive sentences share almost the same structure with passive sentences of participants' L1, namely *bahasa Indonesia*, (see figure 4.9 and 4.10 below).

Sentences	Characteristics					
	Passive					
	S	To be	past participle	O	by prep	Agent Agentless
The hut had been built in the woods by Deena.	x	x	x	x	x	x
The fish is asked the same question by Deena.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Deena is given satisfaction by the answer	x	x	x	x	x	x
With the milk that the cows gave, the money is easily	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cows were fed well by Deena	x	x	x	x	x	x
The snake was killed with a stick by somebody	x	x	x	x	x	x
You will be given a ticket by manager	x	x	x	x	x	x

Figure 4.9 Passive sentences

Although, in general English passive voice considerably emphasizes only *to be + past participle* in its structure (Suprato, 2012); the other items in passive with expressed agent help participants to comprehend this type of passive. The preposition 'by', and the past participle verb are the items that essentially indicate passive sentences with expressed agent; the other two items in the sentences are: subject, and object. In fact, those sorts of items are essential in formulating Indonesian passive sentences; Alwi (1998) points out that subject, object and preposition "by" are important elements to indicate passive sentences, and Indonesian passive voice largely includes subject and object in nearly all formation of passive. Both Indonesian and English languages share the same items as indications to passive voice, exclude 'to be/copula be'. Indonesian passive sentences use the prefix- *di* attach to a verb to

indicate passive sentences. Figure 4.10 shows similarities in English and Indonesian passive sentences.

Sentences	Characteristics						
	Passive						
	S	To be	participle/d-part	O	by prep	Agent	Agentless
The hut had been built in the woods by Deena.	v	v	v	v	v	v	
Buku cerita Nani dipinjam oleh Siska	v		v	v	v	v	
The snake was killed with a stick by somebody	v	v	v	v	v	v	
Buah mangga diambil dengan jaring oleh ayah	v		v	v	v	v	
You will be given a ticket by manager	v	v	v	v	v	v	
Kamu akan diberi bonus oleh atasanmu	v		v	v	v	v	

Figure 4.10 English and Indonesian passive sentences

This point highlights that striking similarities in the structure of two languages contribute significant points to comprehend agent types of English passive voice in second language learning.

In addition to passive with expressed agent, a sentence that also receives a positive impact of L1 interference is active with expressed agent. Figure 4.11 reveals active sentences, that are easily understood by the learners and considerably attain correct answers, are those having a structure such as S+V+O+Adverb. Although each sentence contains different tenses, the learners can still identify it correctly. Thus, this revelation also signifies that learners

have comprehended the present, present continuous and past tenses.

Sentences	Characteristics				
	Active				
	S	V	O	Agent	Agentless
the chef is preparing the best souffle I have ever tasted	v	v	v	v	
Somebody stole my pen yesterday	v	v	v	v	

Figure 4.11 Active sentences

The two sentences show recognizable similarities to active structure of Indonesian language, albeit Indonesian language does not have tenses like English. The similarities lie on the sentence structure such as: S+P+O+K; S+V+O+Adverb, figure 4.12 reveals more concrete explanation. The word 'kemarin' indicates the past event equal to 'yesterday' in English; the word 'sedang' indicates the present continuous tense; moreover, the patterns of sentences are the same.

Sentences	Characteristics					
	Active					
	S	V/P	O	K/Adv	Agent	Agentless
Somebody stole my pen yesterday	v	v	v	v	v	
Ayah membeli buku kemarin	v	v	v	v	v	
the chef is preparing the best souffle I have ever tasted	v	v	v	v	v	
Ibu sedang memasak sop kesukaan saya	v	v	v	v	v	

Figure 4.12 English and Indonesian active sentences

In conclusion, L1 interference affects second language learning in a positive way; specifically, in a way

that learners comprehend agent type of active and passive sentences. The participants' knowledge of the structures of Indonesian active and passive, and the recognizable similarities between those sentences help participants to comprehend better about these active and passive voices. Moreover, Lado (1957, as cited in Harley, 2005) suggests that learners will be confronted with difficulty in the process of learning second language when L1 and L2 differ. Lado (1957) also mentions that the grammatical structures of first language are transferred to the second language; however, such interferences can either be positive or negative. Bada (2001) also states that L1 interference can either give a positive impact or a negative impact on the process of learning second language. Bada demonstrates that learners' L1 is considered an obstacle when it eradicates the process of learning; on the other hand, L1 is considered to offer positive impact when it gives the learners' power to predict the errors during the process of learning and

helps learners in the process of learning L2.

However, the negative interference appears for the sentences without expressed agent (agentless). Figure 4.13 shows passive sentences that attain the lowest score of correct answers. The sentences share the same type, which are passive sentences without expressed agent. The characteristics of these sentences, they do not have recognizable items to clearly indicate passive voice.

The sentences largely come from part III, learners are asked to change the sentences into active or passive; it depends on the first form of a given sentence. Participants have difficulty to change passive sentences without expressed agent into active ones. Instead of changing the sentences into passive, participants change it into passive by adding "it" in front of the sentences (see figure 4.14).

Sentences	Changed Sentences	Frequency
The wind blew down the trees.	The trees were blown down by the wind	5
He lectures the students for not coming to class prepared.	The students are lectured by him for not coming to class prepared	6
Early booking is advised.	advise early booking	4
Parking in front of their gate is not allowed	They do not allow people parking in front of their gate	4
Consulting a good doctor is advised	advise consulting a good doctor	5

Figure 4.13 Change sentences

Former sentences	Current sentences
Early booking is advised.	It is advised to early booking
Parking in front of their gate is not allowed	It is not allowed to park in front of their gate
Consulting a good doctor is advised	It is advised to consult a good doctor

Figure 4.14 Changing passive into active sentences

Furthermore, agentless or passive without expressed agent does not have items such as “by” and “subject”, which can help participants to easily identify those sentences. Although Indonesian language has a formation that is similar to English passive without expressed agent, the highlighted point is different. According to Alwi (1998), passive sentences can highlight the unintended action or verb by using a prefix- *ter* instead of *di-*; on the other hand, English passive voice tends to emphasize the subject in the sentence, agentless passive is commonly used when agent is considered not important, not known or obvious; thus, it is not needed to mention (Walker & Elsworth, 1995).

Sentences	
Parking in front of their gate is not allowed	Penumpang bus itu terlempar ke luar
Consulting a good doctor is advised	Pengendara motor itu terjatuh

Figure 4.15 English active and passive sentences

B. Grammatical Error

After the interference in the sentence’s structure, another interference discovered is grammatical error. This is a common problem that might be confronted by second language learners; especially, when their first language does not introduce linguistic features such as tenses in their language.

This finding signifies that Indonesians as English learners have great difficulty dealing with the use of correct tenses when changing the active sentences into passive and vice versa; the data also uncover that the way they write the sentences is still affected by their way of writing in first language, further explanation is presented below.

1. The wrong tenses

Table 4.1 reveals that learners have often mistaken past tense into present or past perfect; this data also show that the way they write and change the sentences are influenced by their way of writing first language.

Table 4.1 List of sentences

Given	Erroneou	Correct
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sentences	s Form	form
Somebody killed the snake with a stick	The snake <i>has been</i> killed with a stick by somebody	The snake <i>was killed</i> with a stick by somebody
The wind blew down the trees	The trees <i>had been</i> blown down by the wind	The trees <i>were blown</i> down by the wind
Has the report been finished by you?	Do you <i>had</i> finished the report?	Have you <i>finished</i> the report?

The sentences above indicate similarity to the pattern of Indonesian sentences, for example:

Instead of writing “the snake *was killed* with a stick by somebody”, some of learners write “the snake *has been* killed with a stick by somebody”. The auxiliary verb “has/have” and past participle “been” have a certain indication to Indonesian

passive sentence for past event. As Suprato (2012) suggests that past tense in Indonesian language is signified by adverb of time such as the word “*kemarin*” or “*telah*”. Moreover, Maisarah (n.d) in her study of language interference also emphasizes Indonesians as English learners often refer to Bahasa Indonesia when they produce either utterances or sentences. Hence, several participants still perceive that active with past tense need to be changed into passive with perfect tense because they are still influenced by their way of writing in L1.

For example, Diani (2016):

1. “*Saya membaca buku*” (present tense) (Diani, 2016)
2. “*Saya telah membaca buku*” (past tense) (Diani, 2016)
3. “*Saya akan membaca buku*” (future tense) (Diani, 2016)

2. Noun Animacy

Figure 4.16 shows active sentences that attain the lowest score of correct answers; the two of sentences, the first and third sentences, share the same items and patterns.

However, these sentences are different from active sentences in figure 4.12, the difference lies on the subject. The subjects in the previous sentences are animate subjects while subjects in the first and third sentences in figure 4.16 are inanimate ones. These types of subjects somehow impact on learners' perception of answering questions.

Sentences	Characteristics				
	Active				
	S	V	O	Agent	Agentless
The answer gave an immense satisfaction.	v	v	v	v	
Deenu feels satisfied by the answer.	v	v	v	v	
The wind blew down the trees.	v	v	v	v	

Figure 4.16 Active sentences with inanimate subjects

Learners mostly fail to identify the first sentence as an active sentence. Most of the learners perceive it as passive sentence; the possibility causing such error somehow lies on the subject and the verb. Indonesian language rarely uses an inanimate subject in active sentences without certain aspects to consider. According to Moeliono (1988), characteristics of subjects, include inanimate subjects in Indonesian sentences are: 1) “*disertai kata tunjuk ini dan itu*” 2) “*diikuti salah satu kata kerja gabung, ialah,*

adalah, menjadi dan merupakan” 3) “*berpartikel-nya*”.

In addition, Speaker of Asian languages frequently undergo difficulty with active verbs with inanimate subject nouns because they perceive that in their language, animate subject is needed in sentences with active verbs (Master, 1991, as cited in Hinkle, 2002). Take a look at the figure 4.17 for more concrete explanation:

Sentences	Characteristics
Kucing <i>ini</i> lucu sekali	adding a demonstrative <i>ini</i> or <i>itu</i>
Mobil <i>itu</i> menabrak pembatas jalan	adding a demonstrative <i>ini</i> or <i>itu</i>
The answer gave an immense satisfaction	using the verb to indicate action
Jawabannya mencerminkan pemahaman	using a particle <i>-nya</i>

Figure 4.17 Subject in Indonesian and English sentences

Individual Differences

This part is aimed to compare the performances among learners who have obtained various scores for grammar. These grammar scores indicate participants' grammatical sensitivity that is essential in this study. In order to clearly view the differences, learners are classified according to their grammar score (A to B and C to D).

Figure 4.18 displays the score attained by learners whose grammar score B to A; the result reveals that 38.46% learners with the range of grammar scores B to A achieve 65% or more of the correct answers. However, 19.23% learners who have an A- to B of grammar score also attain below 65% as revealed in the figure 4.19.

Students	Toefl score	Grammar score	ART 1	ART 2	ART 3	Percentage	mean score
2	490	A-	21	17	17	85%	18.33
3		A-	19	20	8	72%	15.67
9	507	B	20	16	14	77%	16.87
11	577	A	25	20	16	94%	20.33
13	553	A-	20	20	9	75%	16.33
14	597	B	11	20	11	65%	14
15		B+	20	17	17	83%	18
18	507	A-	20	20	19	91%	19.67
19	567	A	24	20	19	97%	21
25		B	18	16	9	66%	14.33

Figure 4.18 Performance of participants with score 65% to 97%

Student	Toefl score	Grammar score	PART 1/25	ART 2/25	ART 3/25	Percentage	mean score
5		B+	17	16	7	62%	13.33
8		B	13	15	7	54%	11.67
17		A-	14	19	7	62%	13.33
20		B+	12	16	7	54%	11.67
23	503	B+	12	17	12	63%	13.67

Figure 4.19 Performance of participants with score 54% to 63%

Figure 4.20 reveals that there are only 15.38% of learners, who have C to C+ of grammar score, attain 65% up to 74% score of the test. On the other hand, 23.08% of them obtain 39% up to 57% as shown in the figure 4.21.

Students	Toefl score	Grammar score	ART 1	ART 2	ART 3	Note	Percentage	mean score
1	457	C	22	9	11		65%	14
4		C	20	14	14		74%	16
16	450	C	20	19	4		68%	14.33
26		C+	17	16	9		68%	14

Figure 4.20 Performance of participants with score 65% to 74%

Students	Toefl score	Grammar score	ART 1	ART 2	ART 3	Percentage	mean score
6	483	C	16	16	5	55%	12.33
10		C	17	12	7	55%	12
12		C	11	13	1	39%	8.33
21		C	16	18	3	57%	12.33
22		C+	15	15	7	57%	12.33
24		D	10	12	6	43%	9.33

Figure 4.21 Performance of participants with score 39% to 57%

After the revelations of learners' performance based on their classification of grammar scores, the findings indicate that learners whose grammar score A to B tend to perform better than those who have C to C+ of grammar score. In the figure 4.18, the learners with A- to A give the highest performances such as 91%, 94% and 97%. Not only give the highest performances as a whole, they also attain a high score in every individual test; moreover, the learners with range of grammar score A- to B give the lowest score as much as 54%. Compare to those learners whose grammar score C to C+ as shown in figure 4.20, the highest score achieved is 74%, and the 74% score is attained by only one learner; furthermore, the

learners with the range of grammar score C+ to D give the lowest score 39% to 43%; the two learners who have C and D for grammar score give the correct answers below 50%. These findings can be concluded that, although the learners whose grammar score B to A show the outcome either more 65% or below, the highest scores given by them are significant number which are 85%-97%, and the lowest score attained is 54% which is still above 50%. Compare to those who obtain D to C+ for grammar score; even though four participants perform 65%-74%, the highest score attained is 74% and the score is only performed by one participant. However, the lowest scores shown are 39%-43%, below 50%.

These data reveal that second language aptitude of learners (Grammatical sensitivity), as indicated by grammar score, affects their successful performances of SLL. This finding also supports claims proposed by Dornyei & Skehan (2003), they mention that individual differences (IDs) have been discovered as one of the most consistent variables either in

the study of SLL or SLA, IDs also contribute various correlations with language attainment in the formal setting. In addition, DeKeyser (2000) particularly emphasizes the importance of aptitude score, DeKeyser points out that aptitude score is an essential variable of proficiency in SLA and SLL contexts.

Furthermore, in the study of second language learning, setting has been largely believed to give an impact on the process of learning second language. The settings are divided into two: formal and informal settings (Spolsky, 1989). Figure 4.22 displays of all people who participate, 69.23% of them experience only a formal setting, which is limited at college to give such exposure to their L2 ability; however, 30.77% learners claim as active L2 users. They use English to communicate with their friends and when they are at home. Figure 4.22 reveals learners who give more exposure to informal settings, and see how it affects to the outcome of the test.

Students	Where do you use English			ART 1/2	ART 2/2	ART 3/2	Percentage	mean score
	Home	School	with your friend					
5	1	1	1	17	16	7	62%	13.33
9		1	1	20	16	14	77%	16.67
14	1	1	1	11	20	11	65%	14
15		1	1	20	17	17	83%	18
16		1	1	20	19	4	66%	14.33
18		1	1	20	20	19	91%	19.67
20	1	1	1	12	16	7	54%	11.67
21		1	1	16	18	3	57%	12.33

Figure 4.22 English used in formal and informal setting

The data reveal that informal setting does not give a significant impact on participants' performance; more exposure to English at informal setting does not determine a good performance in how they comprehend active and passive (agent and agentless) sentences. It can be viewed in the figure 4.22; the three participants who give more exposure to English at informal setting, they do not attain higher score than those who use English only with friends and when they are at college.

This finding is also in line with the claim in the issue of settings of second language. According to Ellis (2005), since informal learning takes place in communicative situation where learners are able to decide the meaning through the contextual cues; thus, those learners are more concerned about the appropriate messages of their utterances rather

than the grammatical form as a formal setting tried to be more concerned (Ellis, 2005).

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that L1 interference is indeed an influential factor in the study of second language. As many researchers demonstrate that L1 interference can occur in the notions of grammar, lexical, word order, pronunciation, certain sentence structures and construction (Montero, et al. 2014; Stefansson, 2013; Latu, 1994; Hinkle, 2002; Master, 1991; Pfaff, 1987; Bates, et al. 1982; Geertzen, et al. 2012; Maisarah, n.d); the findings of this present study also contribute to the area of L1 interference, specifically in the notions of grammar and sentence structures. Furthermore, this present study supports the claim that is stated by Master (1991) in his study; Master points out the speakers of Asian languages, in particular Japanese speakers, frequently have difficulty dealing with active verbs with inanimate subject nouns. His study also reveals the reason for the speakers

having such difficulty with such sentences is, in their perception and because of L1 interference, animate subjects are necessary in sentences with active verbs. Master also states that in the notion of English active and passive construction, the noun animacy does not play a significant role in sentences with animate and abstract noun. Similarly, this present study discovers that speakers of Asian languages, Indonesian speakers in particular, are also confronted with the difficulty of understanding the active sentences with inanimate subject. They perceive in Indonesian language, it is unusual to treat inanimate noun as a subject in the sentence without adding a certain particle such as “*nya*” or adding demonstratives “*ini, itu*” (Moeliono, 1988).

Moreover, the findings of this present study also uncover another factor affecting second language learning, namely second language aptitude which is grammatical sensitivity in particular. This present study discovers that learners with high grammar scores, with a range of score from A to B, tend to perform well in

every part of the tests. Additionally, this present study is also in line with the outcome presented in the study by Sureda (2015); the findings signify that aptitude plays a significant role to the performance of 2nd year students who feel less anxious and more motivated. Moreover, Sureda (2015) emphasizes that learners’ aptitude mostly correlates with course scores.

This study investigates a specific notion of active and passive voices, namely agent and agentless types; by investigating those certain types, this study at least bears significance in two respects: first, since this study investigates specific types of active and passive voices; therefore, the study contributes the classification of what types of active and passive voices that appear to be more difficult to learn in second language. By classifying these types, this study is expected to make learners easier to learn active and passive voices in second language. Second, unlike the previous studies that only investigate the factors cause passive voice difficult to learn; this study is more interested in discovering of how

learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices, hence, this study uncovers the ways that learners comprehend certain types of English active and passive voices, these are: by identifying the items in sentences and by selecting explicit choices. These kinds of findings can be useful for the teaching strategies of English active and passive voices especially for Indonesian learners who learn English as second language.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The present study has analyzed the result of individual test regarding the agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices. This study aims to investigate on how Indonesians as English learners comprehend English active and passive voice, especially in the notion of agent and agentless types and to discover factors affecting it. This study employs one framework in Psycholinguistics by Spolsky (1986), namely second language learning.

This study concludes that there are two major ways on how Indonesian as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices: first, by identifying the items in sentences; second, by selecting explicit choices in their test. Furthermore, L1 interference gives major impacts on how Indonesians as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive voice. This L1 interference is discovered to give both of positive and negative impacts on learners' comprehension. The grammatical structures of first language are transferred to the second language; however, such interferences can either be positive or negative (Lado, 1957 as cited in Harley, 2005). Bada (2001) also claims that learners' L1 is considered an obstacle when it eradicates the process of learning; on the other hand, L1 is considered to offer positive impact when it gives the learners' power to predict the errors during the process of learning and helps learners in the process of learning L2. It can be interpreted that L1 interference either can give positive

impacts or negative impacts of second language learning. Grammatical sensitivity, in this case one aspect indicates second language aptitude; it reveals to play a significant role in the second language learning. Learners whose great scores of grammar tend to perform almost perfectly in every part of the tests given

Based on the research findings that following recommendations are made:

Learners should be encouraged to read as much as possible in English, as it will help learners to understand various types of sentences especially in the active and passive voices. Learners should put more practice in active and passive voices, and be aware of parts that they do not really comprehend. Teachers should teach learners the types of active and passive voices in explicit way, and be aware of the difficulty that is confronted by the learners. Teachers should implement a strategy in teaching that enables learners to understand easily.

The recent research can be replicated in the same level or different level with more participants from

Indonesians as English learners; therefore, the future studies can verify the findings that have been established in this study. The other ways of comprehending active and passive voices can be further investigated in studies similar to this current one; thus, the further studies can determine many ways of comprehending that can help people to learn English active and passive voices. Further study on relationship between comprehension of Indonesians as English learners on certain linguistic aspects and the factors affecting it can be pursued for the development of second language learning study in Indonesia.

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