



A STUDY ON MASTERING ENGLISH PASSIVE VOICE IN SIMPLE PRESENT, SIMPLE PAST AND SIMPLE FUTURE TENSES BY THE GRADE 12TH STUDENTS OF ESCOLA SECUNDARIA PUBLICA NOBEL DA PAZ, DILI TIMOR-LESTE IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2020

By Augusta Assunção, Adelaide da Costa Lay and Atanasio A. Gusmão Freitas Belo

gusmaoata@gmail.com

English Education Department, University of Dili (UNDIL) – Timor Leste

ABSTRACT: This study is entitled “A study on Mastering English Passive Voice (simple present, simple past and simple future tense) by the Grade 12 Students of Escola Secundária Pública Nobel da Paz, Dili Timor-Leste in the School Year 2020”. The aim of this study is to find out whether or not the grade 12 students master English passive voice as well as to know their mastery level. The population of this study is all the grade 12 students that consisted of four classes and only 30 students who were selected randomly as the sample or respondents. The instrument used for the data collection is a questionnaire in which it comprises 30 numbers of questions. The methods used in this research are qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Keywords: *English passive voice, simple present, simple past, simple future tense.*

INTRODUCTION

Knowing a foreign language is important because it is one of the main ways to communicate and interact with one another. It helps keep us in contact with other people. To bridge those people to interact with another we must need a language that is easily accessible such as English. Crystal (2003, p.5), “states that English turns and makes the big world into a small village”. It means that English as a global language that has invited and connected all the people worldwide together in term of communication. In addition, Seidlhofer (2005, p.339), “that English as a world language, international language or global language communication may highly effectively avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation among individuals”. The importance of English today cannot be denied and ignored since it has become an international language spoken all over the world. English is now playing very vital roles in many sectors such as business, media, education and etc. English proficiency is one of the most decisive capabilities in finding employment. This phenomenon is underlying the presence of education system all over the world including Timor-Leste in which its Ministry of Education has officially included English in the national curriculum as one of the compulsory subjects that are necessary for students to learn at schools. Since English has been a subject to be learned at school, the students are required to master its skills and elements for the purpose of communication. Thus, to gain an understandable and effective communication with the others the schools frequently focus on some of the more formal aspects of English skills and elements. The classes may teach students the grammatically correct way of speaking and writing which includes proper sentence structure and verb conjugation and will

generally provide a very structured approach to language learning. So the students are demanded to be able to apply correctly the rules of grammar to facilitate them to create a meaningful ideas, messages or thoughts before they express. Thus, in teaching and learning English, teachers should emphasize and ask their students to deeply concentrate on the grammar. This is because if without having very good knowledge of grammar students might not be successful in learning English at schools. De Capua (2008, pp.14-15) states that, “for teachers of ESL/EFL learners, a knowledge of how English works is essential. Teachers need to be able to talk about how sentences are constructed, about the types of words and word groups that make up sentences, and about the functions of these words and word groups within sentences and in larger contexts. With this knowledge, teachers can help their students understand the language and know what their students need to learn in order to acquire it. Without knowing the essential components, as well as the complexities of the language in question, it is difficult to understand what learners actually need to know in order to learn the new language”.

Dykes (2007, p.6) states that, “the simplest and perhaps the truest definition of grammar is “a language to talk about language”. Just as one cannot explain how a motor engine functions (or is failing to function) without naming words for its parts and their specific actions, so it is impossible to explore the function of words and the part they play in forming meaningful language without a naming procedure”. In that sense, English grammar is an important guide that may helps students have a deep knowledge and mastery for a better communication purpose. Therefore, the researcher would like to carry out

this research to find out whether or not the grade 12 students of Escola Secundária Pública Nobel da Paz, Dili Timor-Leste in the school year 2020 master English grammar especially in passive voice of simple present, simple past and simple future tense as well as to point out their mastery level towards English passive voice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Grammar is the way we put the words together so that they make sense. Words are like pieces of a jigsaw. We need to fit them together properly to make meaning (Dignen, 2017, p.8). Meanwhile, Carter and Michael McCarthy (2006, p.1), grammar is concerned with how sentences and utterances are formed. In a typical English sentence, we can see the two most basic principles of grammar, the arrangement of items and the structure of items. Many grammar books discuss the active or passive use of a verb as voice. Active voice refers to sentences where the “doer” or the “agent” is the grammatical subject and the “receiver” of the action is the grammatical object, and only transitive verbs that can take an object. This is because the subject of a sentence in passive voice is the original object of the verb in active voice. The passive consists of “be” + “main verb in the past participle form”. The verb be can occur in any tense, but the main verb is always in the past participle form. In teaching the forms of the passive, grammar books for ESL/EFL learners generally introduce the forms by showing and practicing transformations of active sentences to passive ones (DeCapua 2008, pp. 256-260). Examples; (active) “*People design new computer games*”, “*People are designing new computer games*”, “*People designed new computer games*” “*People will design new computer games*”. (passive) “*New computer games are designed by people*”, “*New computer games are being designed by people*”, “*New computer games were designed by people*”, “*New computer games will be designed by people*”.

Meanwhile, Azar (2003, pp. 276-277) passive is a type of sentence in which the object in an active sentence becomes the subject in a passive sentence. The subject in an active sentence is the object of “by” phrase in a passive sentence. The form of all passive verbs: “be” + “past participle”. “Be” can be in any of its forms: am, is, are, was, were, has been, have been, will be, etc. Examples; (active) “*John mails the letter*”, “*She flew the kite*”, “*They will fix the car*”. (passive) “*The letter is mailed by John*”, “*The kite was flown by her*”, “*The cars will be fixed by them*”.

Moreover, we use passives when we describe a process by talking about what is done, not what does it, and when we report events but we do not know or it is not important, who performs the actions (Yule, 2006, p. 62). Examples: “*Wine is made from grapes*”, “*Oranges are grown in Spain*”, “*Oil has to be imported*”, “*My bag was stolen*”, “*Some trees have been cut down*”, “*I think the old road has been repaired*”. He added that we use

passives to talk about the subject as the person or thing affected by the actions, often when the subject is the topic of two or more sentences. We can use passives for several actions that affect the same subject in a single sentence. Examples: “*After registration, course cannot be added, dropped or changes without permission*”. “*The house is still for sale, it was built in 1928. It was completely renovated in 2002.*”

Furthermore, the passive voice is a type of grammatical voice in which the subject is acted upon by the verb. In passive voice sentences, the subject is the receiver of the action (i.e., what would be the direct object in an active voice sentence). For example: “*The concert was attended by many young people.*” “*The necklace is being made by a child.*” Passive-voice verbs are always preceded by the auxiliary verb be and are in their past participle forms. While the receiver of the action comes before the verb, the person or thing performing the action (known as the agent) comes after the verb and is preceded by the preposition “by” to form a prepositional phrase (Herring, 2016, p.774). Examples: “*The lights were turned off by the janitor*”, “*Final exams will be taken by students on Friday*”, “*Letters to Santa are sent by children every year.*”

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers applied two methods in conducting the research namely quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative method was used to statistically analyze the data obtained from the respondents in the field. Meanwhile qualitative method was used to describe the results of data analysis. After gathering the data, the writer used some techniques to facilitate him in discussing analyzing the students’ answers in the test given. Therefore, the researcher made tabulation, coding and numbering in order to be able to categorize number of the total number of correct answers, wrong answers and null answers made by them. To know the scores of each student both individually and as a whole, the researcher used the formula of Dajan (1991) namely:

$$\frac{A}{B} = \frac{X}{X} = \frac{100\%}{C}$$

A = total number of correct or wrong answer
 B = total number of tested
 C = total number of item test

After finding the students’ scores, the researchers classified the level of students’ mastery based on the category below:

- 0-10 = Low Level
- 11-20 = Average Level
- 21-30 = High Level

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers attempts to explain the results of the research after gathering the data in the field especially at Escola Secundária Pública Nobel da Paz, Dili Timor-Leste in the School Year 2020. The results of the data analysis are presented in the table below:

Table 1. The Percentage of Students' Results

Nu. of Students	Tests	Results with Percentages		Null	%	%	%
		CA	WA				
1	30	5	0.56%	25	2.78%	0	0.0%
2	30	12	1.33%	18	2.00%	0	0.0%
3	30	13	1.44%	17	1.89%	0	0.0%
4	30	9	1.00%	17	1.89%	4	0.4%
5	30	11	1.22%	17	1.89%	2	0.2%
6	30	8	0.89%	22	2.44%	0	0.0%
7	30	6	0.67%	24	2.67%	0	0.0%
8	30	6	0.67%	24	2.67%	0	0.0%
9	30	10	1.11%	20	2.22%	0	0.0%
10	30	8	0.89%	22	2.44%	0	0.0%
11	30	7	0.78%	23	2.56%	0	0.0%
12	30	16	1.78%	14	1.56%	0	0.0%
13	30	5	0.56%	24	2.67%	1	0.0%
14	30	11	1.22%	19	2.11%	0	0.0%
15	30	9	1.00%	21	2.33%	0	0.0%
16	30	12	1.33%	18	2.00%	0	0.0%
17	30	8	0.89%	22	2.44%	0	0.0%
18	30	10	1.11%	20	2.22%	0	0.0%
19	30	10	1.11%	20	2.22%	0	0.0%
20	30	12	1.33%	18	2.00%	0	0.0%
21	30	8	0.89%	22	2.44%	0	0.0%
22	30	3	0.33%	27	3.00%	0	0.0%
23	30	6	0.67%	24	2.67%	0	0.0%
24	30	8	0.89%	22	2.44%	0	0.0%
25	30	6	0.67%	24	2.67%	0	0.0%
26	30	8	0.89%	22	2.44%	0	0.0%
27	30	3	0.33%	22	2.44%	5	0.5%

28	30	7	0.78%	23	2.56%	0	0.0%
29	30	14	1.56%	16	1.78%	0	0.0%
30	30	13	1.44%	17	1.89%	0	0.0%
30 x 30:	26	29.33%	624	69.3%	12	1.33%	6
900	4			3%			

The researchers provided the students with 900 questions with the percentage of 100%. The students were expected to obtain 900 scores (correct answers) and should be in the high level category because they have learnt English passive voice at school. The 900 (100%) correct answers were from total students (30 sample/respondents) multiplied with total number of the tests (30 questions). The results of the data analysis indicate that thirty students of the grade 12 (students) who were selected as the respondents of this study made 264 (29.33%) correct answers, 624 (69.33%) wrong answers, and 12 (1.33%) null answers. In comparing between correct and wrong answers, the wrong answers were significantly higher than correct answers. It means that even if those students have learnt English grammar but they were still unable to master English passive voice of simple present, simple past and simple future tense.

Table 2. The Low Level of Students' Scores

Nu.	Students' seats	Scores	%	Score of ranges: 3-10
1	22	3	0.33%	
2	27	3	0.33%	
3	1	5	0.56%	
4	13	5	0.56%	
5	7	6	0.67%	
6	8	6	0.67%	
7	23	6	0.67%	
8	25	6	0.67%	
9	11	7	0.78%	
10	28	7	0.78%	
11	6	8	0.89%	
12	10	8	0.89%	
13	17	8	0.89%	
14	21	8	0.89%	
15	24	8	0.89%	
16	26	8	0.89%	
17	4	9	1%	
18	15	9	1%	
19	9	10	1.11%	
20	18	10	1.11%	
21	19	10	1.11%	
Total: 21 Students	150	16.67%		

This table describes about the low level of students' scores. The results show that there were twenty one

students obtaining 150 (16/67%) scores (correct answers) in the test given. Their scores range from 3 to 10. It points out that two students with the sitting numbers 22 and 27 got scores 3, two students with the sitting numbers 1 and 13 got scores 5, four students with the sitting numbers 7, 8, 23 and 25 obtained scores 6, two students with the sitting numbers 11 and 28 obtained scores 7, six students with the sitting numbers 6, 10, 17, 21, 24 and 26 gained scores 8, two students with the sitting numbers 4 and 15 gained scores 9, and three students in the sitting 9, 18, and 19 gained scores 10. Based on this indication, it could be concluded that grade 12 students of Escola Secundária Pública Nobel da Paz, Dili TimorLeste in the school year 2019 were mostly categorized in low level of mastering English passive voice of simple present, simple past and simple future tense. This is because the scores obtained by students were very poor or only in low level category.

Table 3. The Average Level of Students’ Scores

Nu.	Students’ seats	Scores	%	Score of ranges: 11-16
1	5	11	1.22%	
2	14	11	1.22%	
3	2	12	1.33%	
4	16	12	1.33%	
5	20	12	1.33%	
6	3	13	1.44%	
7	30	13	1.44%	
8	29	14	1.56%	
9	12	16	1.78%	
Total: 9 Students	114	12.67%		

This last table indicates the average level of students’ scores. The results show that there were nine students obtaining 114 (12.67%) scores (correct answers) in the test provided. Their scores range from 11 till 20. It indicates that two students with the sitting numbers 5 and 14 obtained scores 11, three students in the sitting number 2, 16 and 20 obtained scores 12, two students with the sitting numbers 3 and 30 had scores 13, one student in the sitting number 29 had score 14, and only one student in the sitting number 12 had score 16. Those nine students were categorized into average level because the scores gained by them were only between low and high level category, and none of the students were in high level category.

CONCLUSIONS

The results show that the grade 12 of Escola Secundária Pública Nobel da Paz, Dili Timor-Leste in the school year 2020 made 264 (29.33%) correct answers, 624 (69.33%) wrong answers, and 12 (1.33%) null answers. It means that even if those students have learnt English grammar but they were still unable to master English passive voice especially of simple present, simple past and simple future tense as the wrong answers

were higher than correct answers. Moreover, there were only nine out of thirty students being categorized in average level with the scores 114 (12.67%) and none of the students were in high level because the scores obtained by them were poor and did not reach the target (high level category).

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of the data analysis, the researcher therefore would like to suggest both teachers and students:

To English teachers:

Firstly, English teachers should be able to design their syllabus and lesson plan as good as possible so that can achieve learning objectives. Secondly, English teachers should master a variety of teaching methodologies and be able to use in classroom teaching, English teachers should apply different techniques, strategies and approaches to attract and assist students learn specifically in learning English grammar, Thirdly, English teachers have to evaluate all teaching materials to make sure that their students fully understand what they have learnt. English teachers also need to give chance to students to discuss and express themselves about what they have learnt in the class. Finally, English teachers need to have learning resources or materials such as textbooks, videos, games, visual aids and etc, to help students learn successfully.

To students:

First of all, the students should pay attention to teachers’ explanation so that they can understand what they are about to learn, students should be able to apply what they have learned by practicing and discussing with their friends either inside or outside the classroom. Next, the students have to do diligently any tasks assigned by their teachers to help them comprehend whatever they learn. After that, students should start building their habits to be familiar with reading text books such as grammar and access other resources like internet and etc. to help improve their English grammar particularly on active and passive voices of simple present, past and simple future tense both in verbal and written expressions. Finally, the students are required to master everything dealing with grammar and should practice in real life situation by which they use English to communicate with others; this is because the main purpose of learning any foreign languages is for communication.

REFERENCES

Andrea DeCapua. Grammar for Teachers. 2008. *A Guide to American English for Native and Non-Native Speakers*. Springer Science Business Media, New York.
 Anto Dajan. 1991. *Pengantar Metode Statistik*. LP3ES Kota Jakarta.

- Betty Schramper Azar. 2003. *Fundamentals of English Grammar with Answer Key*. Second Edition. Pearson Education, 10 Bank Street, White Plains USA.
- Barbara Dykes. 2007. *Grammar for Everyone: Practical Tools for Learning and Teaching Grammar*. ACER Press, Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd.
- Crystal, David. 2003. *English as a Global Language* (2nd). Retrieved from: <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=d6jPAKxTHR YC&printsec>.
- Cambridge Grammar of English. 2006. *A Comprehensive Guide Spoken and Written English Grammar and Usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- George, Yule. 2006. *Advanced Oxford Practice Grammar with Answers*. Oxford University Press.
- Peter, Herring. 2016. *The Farlex Grammar Book: Complete English Grammar Rule*. Copyright Farlex International.
- República Democrática de Timor-Leste. 2010. *The National Curriculum by Ministry of Education*. Rua Vila Verde Dili, Timor-Leste.
- Seidlhofer, B. 2005. Key Concepts In ELT. English As A Lingua Franca. *ELT Journal*, 59(4), 339-341doi:10.1093/elt/cci064.
- Sheila Dignen. 2017. *Visual Guide to Grammar and Punctuation*. First American Edition. DK Publishing, Hudson Street, New York.