

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ABILITY OF FOURTH SEMESTER ENGLISH  
DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN CONSTRUCTING PASSIVE VOICE IN  
WRITING EXPLANATORY ESSAY**

**THESIS**



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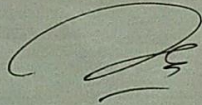
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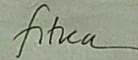
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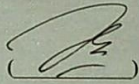
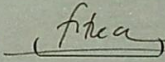
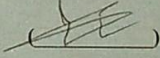
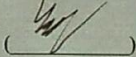
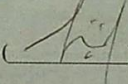
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An Analysis of The Ability of Fourth Semester English Department  
Students in Constructing Passive Voice in Writing Explanatory Essay

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The writer

## ABSTRACT

**Yunita, Rima. 2017. An Analysis of the Ability of Fourth Semester English Department Students in Constructing Passive Voice in Writing Explanatory Essay. Thesis. Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. FBS. UNP Padang.**

This study is aimed to describe the ability of the fourth semester English department students at UNP, who are registered in 2015/2016 academic year, in constructing passive voice in writing explanatory essay. In addition, this study is also aimed to find out common grammatical problems in constructing passive voice. This study is classified into descriptive quantitative research. The population of this research is fourth semester English department students in 2015/2016 academic year. The total number of the sample is 32 fourth semester English department students in 2015/2016 academic year. There are 5 students from K1 class, 5 students from K2 class, 5 students from K3 class, 5 students from K4 class, 6 students from NK1, and 6 students from NK2 class. Proportional random sampling technique was used to collect the sample. The data were collected by using writing test. Four topics were given to the students and they were asked to choose one of them. Students were asked to write passive sentences in their essay and the test was done in 90 minutes. Based on the findings of the research, it was found that students' ability in constructing passive voice is in average level. There are four common grammatical problems identified from the students' writing, which are grammatical problem related to the use of auxiliary *be* (22%), the use of past participle verb (46%), the agreement of subject and auxiliary (20%), and the choice of voice that should be used to construct the sentences (12%). Some suggestions are proposed to the lecturers that they should pay attention in teaching grammar especially passive voice. Besides, the lecturers have to pay attention to the teaching and learning especially to the use of grammar in writing.

Key words: passive voice, explanatory essay, ability.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **A. Background of the Problem**

Writing is one of the language skills that needs to be mastered. Through writing, people can express and share their ideas to the others. Writing is considered as an active process involving some steps to write an understandable and informative writing. In order to write a good writing, there are some aspects that need to be completed. The aspects are the ideas of the writing, the format of the writing, and the language used in writing.

In English department of Universitas Negeri Padang, the students are introduced to many kinds of writing some of which are texts from some different genres. Students then discuss the process about how to write a text for each genre of text. Besides the process of gathering and developing ideas for the writing, the students also need to pay attention to the general classification and language features of each text.

One of the aspects included in the language features of a text is grammar. Grammar is an important aspect in writing. The idea of the writing will be clearly understood by the readers through sentences which are grammatically correct. Thornburry (1999:1) states that “grammar is a description of rules that governs how a language’s sentences are formed and it attempts to explain why the sentences are acceptable”. In conclusion, the sentences in the writing will be accepted and easy to be understood if they are constructed by following the grammar rule.

Considering grammar aspects such as tenses, clauses, and sentence forms in writing is necessary. Students have to use correct tense, sentence construction, and word choices so that the writing product will be considered as a good writing. Since the students have to deal with the process of gathering and developing ideas and also the grammar, writing is not easy for the students.

There are several subjects that are learned by English department students, some of which are writing and grammar subjects. Both subjects are compulsory subjects. Eventhough writing and grammar are learned separately, students have to apply the grammar knowledge in their writing. The students have to pay attention to the language features of the text some of which are related to grammar use.

In addition, one of texts that is learned by the second year students is Explanatory essay. In writing the explanatory essay, the students do not only focus on the ideas, but they also have to focus on the language form. In this case, one language form that should be used by the students in writing an explanatory essay is passive form. Since passive voice focuses on the action rather than the doer, passive voice becomes a lexicogrammatical feature of explanatory essay which focuses on how and why something happens. Moreover, since the students have to write explanatory essay, which is one of academic writings, they are suggested to also construct sentences in various types of sentence.

Related to the explanation above, passive voice may cause problems for the students. The students must pay attention to the subject, object, verb, to be and the tense. The students have to change their attention to the action verb rather than to the subject. Appropriate tense and verb form will decide whether the passive sentence is correct or not. Moreover, the features of passive voice itself will cause problem to the students. Rivandi (2012) did research on correct use of passive voice done by the college students in Somali who were taking Intensive English Course in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in intermediate level. It was found that the main types of incorrect passive voice are caused by the wrong use of past participle verb, overgeneralization, and to be. It is stated that the students have problems since the structure of passive sentence is quite complex and they sometimes overgeneralize the change of past participle verb. Rivandi found that the students wrote *the wall was painten by the man, the house painted or renewed by men, the house was rebuilted, etc.* These findings indicate that students have problems in constructing passive voice.

Passive voice is one of the features in Explanatory essay; however, the students do not need to write all of the sentences in passive voice. They have to know when to use the passive voice appropriately. Moaddab (2014) mentions that passive voice is used when the writer/ speaker wants to focus on the action rather than the actor and when the actor is not important and unknown. In addition, in academic writings passive voice is used when the writer/ speaker wants to emphasize the result. In this case,

the students should be able to construct passive voice correctly and they should use them effectively.

After doing a preliminary research in which the researcher collected some explanatory essays written by third semester English department students of 2015 academic year, the researcher found that the students have problems in constructing passive voice in explanatory essay. In this case, there are some sentences in their explanatory essays that should be written in passive voice but the students construct the sentences in the active one and vice versa. For example, a student wrote *Then, the pulp takes to the third place, fourdinier, in purpose for discarding the water* while it should be written as *Then, the pulp is taken to the third place, fourdinier, in purpose for discarding the water*. Another student wrote *This phenomenon is interesting to investigate* while it should be written as *This phenomenon is interesting to be investigated*.

Students also wrote sentence that should be written in active voice but they wrote it in passive voice. For example, *Students who were graduated from universities or school in other countries will get better assessment from other people around them,* while it should be written as *Students who graduate from universities or school in other countries will get better assessment from other people around them*. The examples above indicate that the second year English department students have problems in constructing passive voice, especially in Explanatory essay.

Another proof from preliminary research done by the writer is about problem in constructing passive voice related to the features of passive voice itself. A common form of passive voice is a combination of Subject + be + Past participle. It is found that the students wrote *It can be **find** from the differences between male and female squash blossoms*, while it should be written as *It can be **found** from the differences between male and female squash blossom*. Another student wrote *it cannot be **avoid***, while it should be written as *it cannot be **avoided***. The examples above indicate that students make mistakes in constructing passive voice. They were mistakes since some students' passive voice are correct. The problems stated above are caused by the complexity of the passive form itself. Furthermore, students still do not know about when to use passive form since they do not really use passive voice in their writing.

Based on these occurrences, the researcher is interested in analyzing the Fourth Semester English Department student of Padang State University ability in constructing passive voice in Explanatory essay.

## **B. Identification of the Problem**

Related to the background of the problem, fourth semester English department students have problems in constructing passive voice in Explanatory essay. First, the students made mistakes in constructing the correct form of passive voice. They did not use past participle verb in their passive sentences. They sometimes left out the auxiliary be. These incorrect passive voices will make the writing become poor writing since

the sentences are hard to understand. Second, the students still wrote active voice for sentences that should be written in passive voice and vice versa. It indicates that the students do not know when and why to use passive voice.

### **C. Limitation of the Problem**

Based on the identification of problems, this research was limited to analyze fourth semester English Department students' ability and grammatical problems in constructing passive voice in explanatory essay.

### **D. Formulation of the Problem**

The formulation of the problem was "How is the ability of the fourth semester English department students in constructing passive voice in Explanatory essay?"

### **E. Research Questions**

The problem was developed into two questions below:

1. What are common grammatical problems in constructing passive voice in writing explanatory essay?
2. How is the ability of the fourth semester English department students in constructing passive voice in explanatory essay?

### **F. Purpose of the Research**

Related to the research question stated previously, the purpose of the analysis was intended to find out:

1. common grammatical problems in constructing passive voice in writing explanatory essay.
2. the ability of fourth semester English department students in constructing passive voice in explanatory essay.

### **G. Significance of the Research**

The result of the study enriches the findings on passive research. Moreover, the findings of this research also give some advantages to the writer and the lecturers. For the writer, it is useful to master how to construct and use passive voice appropriately. For the lecturers, the result of this research gives information about students' ability and problem in constructing passive voice. In addition, the result of this research contributes to the preparation to an appropriate technique that can be used to improve students' ability in constructing passive voice.

### **H. Definition of Key Terms**

1. Passive voice is type of sentences which focuses on the action verb instead of the doer or agent of the verb.
2. Explanatory essay is one genre of text which functions to explain the processes of how and why something happen. It uses passive voice to structure the text.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

#### **A. Conclusion**

Students' ability which is in average level and problems they faced may be caused by the students' lack understanding of passive voice. Students are familiar with active voice rather than passive voice. They tend to use active voice in writing so that they face difficulties in constructing passive voice. Students may also think that constructing passive voice is not really complicated since they have to focus only on the passive verb which is the combination of auxiliary be and past participle verb. This problem may occur as the result of exercises provided by the lecturers which only focus on exercise drills for some passive structures. As the result, when it comes to writing, students rarely use passive voice and make errors since they do not know when and how to use passive voice.

#### **B. Suggestion**

Based on the findings of the research, some suggestions are proposed to the lecturers and teachers for getting the better result in learning and teaching passive voice in writing. The lecturers and teachers should not only provide the students grammar exercise drill. The lecturers should use other kind of tasks, for example writing task, to improve students' grammar understanding. The lecturers and teachers should pay attention that there are similarities and differences between English and Bahasa Indonesia passive voice.

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