The Use of Passive Voice in English MA Theses Written by Arab non-native Speakers of English

A Paper

Submitted to the Council of the Department of English/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Babylon in The Use of Passive Voice in English MA Theses Written by Arab non-native Speakers of English

By

Huda Saadi Abdul-Mahdi Hasson

Supervised By:

Asst.prof Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

" ...وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا * وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا "

صدق الله العلي العظيم

(الطلاق/2-3)

To My Family

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The present study is about the use of passive voice in English MA theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English. The present study aims to identify the uses of passive voice in abstracts of master's theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English. It is limited to investigate the passive voice in abstracts of master's theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English and is of theoretical significance as it enables those interested in the English language to know the passive voice.

The findings of the analysis is that the active voice is used higher than the passive voice because the passive voice is used when of agent of the action is not the most significant part .The passive is used in speech , writing, textbooks ,reports , scientific, news reports and describing procedures or processes. The analyzed samples contained only a few of the previously mentioned uses, so the active is higher than the passive.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem

The problem of the present study lies in the need to investigate the passive voice in the abstracts of master's theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English .

1.2 Aim of the Study

The present study aims to identify the uses of passive voice in the abstracts of master theses written by Arab non-native speakers in English.

1.3 Limits of the Study:

The present study is limited to investigate the passive voice in abstracts of master's theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English.

1.4 Procedure of the Study:

Several samples of master's theses written by non-native English-speaking Arabs are taken to investigate the passive voice .

1.5 Significance:

The present study is of theoretical significance as it enables those interested in the English language to know the passive voice and identify the uses of passive voice in the abstracts of master theses written by Arab non-native speakers in English.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Passive Voice

In English grammar, voice refers to the active and passive use of a verb. The active voice is used to make a direct statement about an action; the executor of the action is the subject of the sentence. However, passive voice is used when an indirect statement is made about some action. The subject of the sentence is the receiver while the original executor of the action is the object of the sentence preceded by the preposition by. In other words, distinguishing between active and passive voices differs in the relationship of the verb to the subject. The subject does the acting in an active sentence while the subject is acted upon, or neglected in a passive sentence. Only transitive verbs can be used in the passive voice because these verbs can be followed by a direct object, and since intransitive verbs are never followed by a direct object they cannot be used in passive sentence (Folse,2016: 187)

Toyota (2009, 476 - 477) describes the English passive as follows: "It is commonly classified into two types: verbal passive and adjectival passive. The difference determined is based on the features of the past participle. When it behaves like a verb, the form is called the verbal passive; when it exhibits adjectival characteristics, it is called the adjectival passive."

2.2 Uses of Passive Voice

The passive voice is employed when the agent of the action (subject - "doer") is not the most significant information. The subject of a passive voice sentence might be either a person or a thing that receives the action. If the writer or speaker wishes to name the agent in a passive voice sentence, they can do so using "by + agent phrase" . Folse goes on to say that naming the agent sometimes seems weird. Folse states that "You should not name the agent when there is no new information or when it is not significant," . An example would be "The president was elected by the people," . By the people can be omitted since they are not new information and are not the most significant part of the text. (Folse, 2009, p 244)

Passive voice can be used with almost any of the verb tenses (Cowan,2008, 393). The passive is used in both speech and writing, but it is more commonly used in writing. It's especially noticeable in textbooks and reports. It is used to describe industrial, scientific, and technological operations, as well as official rules .It is often not important to say who is doing the action, or it is difficult to say. The passive is also often used in news reports , e.g. A number of political prisoners have been released. (Eastwood, 1999, 134).

Passives use when the agent: is not known: e.g. My office was broken into when I was on holiday. And in factual writing, particularly in describing procedures or processes. The agent is often omitted and use passives,It is often more natural to put long subjects at the end of a sentence. Using the passive allows to do this. So, for example: I was surprised by Don's decision to give up his job and move to Sydney , is more natural than 'Don's decision to give up his job and move to Sydney surprised me', although the choice can depend on considerations of style and context. (Hewings, 2005, 48)

2.3 Structure of Passive Voice

Passive voice sentences can occur in all of the tenses such as present, past, present progressive, present perfect, and modals (Cowan, 2008, p.393 ; Folse, 2009, p.244). The tense used depends on when an action happenes and on the message that is being conveyed. Not all sentences with a "be + past participle" are passive sentences. Some past participles are adjectives, so the sentence is considered a passive look-a like (Cowan, 2008, p.403).

Table 1: Comparing the Difference between the Active and Passive Voice of the Verbs in these Sentences (as cited in Folse, 2009, p. 244).

Verb	Active VoiceVERB	Passive voice be + PAST PARTICIPLE
Present	I wash my car every Saturday.	My car is washed every Saturday.
Past	Shakespeare wrote that play.	That play was written by Shakespeare.
Present Progressive	They are making a special plan.	A special plan is being made.
be + going to	They're going to build a house here.	A house is going to be built here
Present Perfect	People have officially celebrated Mother's Day since 1914.	Mother's Day has officially been celebrated since 1914.
Modals	The government should prohibit the sale of cigarettes.	The sale of cigarettes should be prohibited by the government.

The passive constructed with auxiliary 'get' is called the get-passive. The syntactic structures of get- and be- passives seem very close to each other (followed by a past participle) .The get passive indicates a sudden change; the be-passive indicates a result. Thus, We were lost describes our situation at a certain point, but We got lost indicates that we were traveling and suddenly did not know our location. The past participle functions here as an adjective that describes the subject. The use of get is considered informal language and is therefore much more common in spoken language than written language. The synonym 'become' often substitutes for 'get' in formal writing. (Folse, 2009 , 245)

In some cases, a passive verb form might be used as an adjective to describe a condition or state instead of an action. In this instance, we use a past participle after a form of the verb be. E.g. The window is closed. This sentence describes the condition of the window now. (Folse, 2009 , 245)

Pullum (2014, 63) proposed two rules to determine if this type of clause is an adjectival passive: 1) verb 'be' can be replaced, e.g., the account seems unlocked, 2) adjectives can be derived with the negative prefix un-, e.g., "the island was uninhabited by humans"

2.4 Academic writing

 Academic writing is a formal style of writing and is generally written in a more objective way, focussing on facts and not unduly influenced by personal opinions. academic writing is writing that is "clear, concise, focussed, structured and backed up by evidence. It is used to meet theassessment requirements for a qualification; the publication requirements for academic literaturesuch as books and journals; and documents prepared for conference presentations. (The Further Education Support Service (FESS) , 2019)

2.4.1 Common types of academic writing

The main types of written work produced by students are presented in thefollowing table.

1-project : a piece of research either individual or group work, with the topic chosen by the students.

2-thesis: the longest piece of writing normally done by a student (20,000+ words) often for a higher degree, on a topic chosen by the student.

3- notes: a written record of the main points of a text or a lecture, for a student's personal use.

4-paper: a general term for any academic essay, report, presentation or article.

5-report: a description of something a student has done. e.g. conducting a survey.

6-essay :the most common type of written work, with the title given by the teacher, normally 1000-5000 words. (Bailey , 2015 , p 4)

2.4.2 The purpose of academic writing

Students should be clear why they are writing.The most common reasons include: 1_ to report on a piece of research the writer has conducted 2- to answer a question the writer has been given or chosen 3- to discuss a subject of common interest and give the writer's view 4- to synthesise research done by others on a topic. (Bailey, 2015, p3)

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the current study, 5 abstracts in MA Theses Written by Arab non-native Speakers of English are being discussed to identify and investigate the passive voice. The total number of the independent clauses are 64. The independent clauses in the active voice are 50 sentences making 76.9%. This means that English prefers to use the active voice . The independent clauses in the passive voice are 15 sentences making 23.1%. As shown in the table below :

Table (2) : Frequency of occurrence of Passive and Active in abstracts MA theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English

Text number	Clause number	Active clause	%	Passive clause	%
Abstract 1	12	8	66.7%	4	33.3%
Abstract 2	13	8	61.5%	5	38.5%
Abstract 3	16	15	93.75%	1	6.25%
Abstract 4	17	15	88.2%	2	11.8%
Abstract 5	7	4	57.1%	3	42.9%
Total	65	50	76.9%	15	23.1%

The results show that the total number of the independent clauses are 64. In the abstract 1 , there are 12 independent clauses, of which 8 are active and 4 are passive. While in the abstract 2 there are 13 independent clauses , of which 8 are active and 5 are passive. While in the third abstract there are 16 independent clauses , of which 15 are active and one is passive. While in the fourth abstract there are 17 independent clauses , of which 15 are active and two are passive. While in the fifth abstract there are 7 independent clauses , of which 4 are active and 3 are passive. The active percentage is 76.9% and the passive percentage is 23.1% .This means that the active voice is used higher than passive voice because the active voice is used to talk about the doer of the action and this is preferred in the abstracts and the passive voice is used to describe industrial, scientific, and technological operations, as well as official rules . The passive is also often used in news reports. Passives are used when the agent is not known and in factual writing, particularly in describing procedures or processes. The analyzed samples contained only a few of the previously mentioned uses, so the percentage of active is higher than passive.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The present study is about the use of passive voice in English MA theses written by Arab non-native speakers of English. After analyzing the samples the study has arrived at the fact that the use of the active voice in abstracts of master's theses written by Arab non- native speakers of English is higher than that of the passive voice because the passive voice is used when the agent of the action (subject - "doer") is not the most significant information. Only a few of the aforementioned uses were present in the samples that were studied, therefore the active is greater than the passive.

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APPENDIX

A Pragmatic Study of Social Justice in the New Testament and Nahjul -Balagha

ABSTRACT 1

Social justice is the fair construction of society . In a just society, there is no one to be marginalized or humiliated because of his religion, ethnic, or social class. All have the same rights to live a dignified life.

The study aims at: (1) revealing the significance of social justice in the New Testament and Nahjul - Balagha from a pragmatic point of view. (2)Finding out the kinds of speech acts utilized in such texts.(3)Pinpointing the kinds of deixes that are employed in this kind of texts (4) Identifying the rhetorical devices that flout the cooperative maxims and generate implicature (5)Detecting the politeness maxims that are used in such texts (6)Pinpointing the similarities and differences in the two texts.

It is hypothesised that : (1) the New Testament and Nahjul - Balagha portrate pragmatically the significance of social justice in similar ways.(2) There are many kinds of speech acts in such texts. (3)All kinds of deixis can be observed in the selected texts (4)Rhetorical devices are utilized to flout the cooperative maxims to deliver the messages in more efficient and reasonable way. (5)Politeness maxims are employed to achieve different goals of the callers of social justice in the selected texts. (6) There are similarities and differences regarding the deployment of the pragmatic strategies in the selected texts of social justice.

An eclectic model of analysis is chosen to investigate the selected social justice texts of the New Testament and

Nahjul-Balagha as far as speech act theory. Levinson's (1983) categories of deixis, the flouting of Grice's (1989) maxims, and Leech's (1983) maxims of politeness. The findings of the analysis validate all the hypotheses of the study.

A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF DELIBERATION IN AMERICAN SELECTED COURTROOM PLAYS

Abstract 2

Deliberation allows a group of persons to receive and exchange information, examine an issue critically, and come to an agreement that infoems decision-making. The study analyses how deliberation is used pragmatically in the chosen data.

The study aims at finding out the stages of the deliberation process, identifying the pragmatic structure of deliberation in the play "Twelve Angry Men" in 1955s and the play " Inherit The wind "in 1955s, discovering the speech acts that are employed by speakers in the two plays and which one is the most frequent, displaying the politeness strategies used by the speakers in the plays and which one is highly used; showing the most frequently violated conversational maxims in the American courtroom plays.

To achieve the aims of the study, it is hypothesized that;. deliberation is a process that consists of eight stages, different stages of deliberation are employed in terms of certain pragmatic strategies in the two plays, various micro and macro speech acts are employed during the deliberation in the American courtroom plays and the speech act of asking is the most frequent use; the politeness strategies are employed and the most frequently use is off record in the American courtroom plays ; the maxim of quantity is the

most violated in the American courtroom plays.

To test the validity of these hypotheses, the study follows certain procedures: surveying literature review of deliberation: analyzing the data pragmatically according to the eclectic model of the present study using a mathematical statistical method, represented by the percentage equation, to calculate the result of the analysis. It is concluded that:

deliberation consists of eight stages, different structures of deliberation are employed in terms of certains pragmatic strategies in the two plays various micro and macro speech acts are employed during the deliberation in the American courtroom plays and the speech act of asking is the most frequent use the politeness strategies are employed and the most frequently use is off record politeness strategy in the two plays the maxim of quantity is the most violated in the American courtroom plays and the eclectic model of deliberation has proved its workability in analysing the chosen data.

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American Political News Reports

Abstract 3

This study is concerned with investigating misrepresentation in British and American news reports from a pragmatic perspective. Hence, the study aims to achieve the following: finding out the types of misrepresentation that are used by British and American news reporters, revealing which pragmatic strategies are employed by British and American news reporters in their attempt to misrepresent facts and events in news reports, determining what is the difference, if there is any, between British and American news reports as far as the exploitation of the pragmatic strategies of misrepresentation is concerned, pinpointing which pragmatic strategy has prevalence over other strategies in British and American news reports, and showing if there are any differences between British and American news reports as far as the stages those reports consist of.

The study hypothesizes that: British and American news reporters use fraudulent misrepresentation in an attempt to misrepresent news reports, british and American news reporters make use of speech acts and fallacies as pragmatic strategies in their attempt to misrepresent facts and events, there is no difference between British and American news reports as far as the exploitation of the pragmatic strategies of misrepresentation is concerned, speech act strategy has prevalence over other strategies in

British and American news reports, and there is no difference between British and American news reports as far as the stages those reports consist of.

The study follows the following producers in order to fulfill its aims and test the validity of its hypotheses: providing a literature review about misrepresentation from a pragmatic perspective, collecting a sample of news reports from different British and American news sites and newspapers to be the data of the study, using the adopted model to pragmatically analyze the data under scrutiny and a suitable statistical mean to analyze the data quantitatively, and discussing the results of the analysis to come up with certain conclusions.

The study arrives at the following conclusions: although there are three types of misrepresentation, fraudulent, negligent and innocent, both British and American news reporters make use only of the fraudulent and innocent type of misrepresentation, in order to falsify facts and events in news reports, British and American news reporters employ a variety of pragmatic strategies, these strategies include speech acts, maxims non-observance, fallacies, and persuasive strategies, there are no differences between British and American news reports as far as the exploitation of the pragmatic strategies of misrepresentation is concemed, the pragmatic strategy of speech acts has prevalence over the other pragmatic strategies, and both British and American news reports consist of the same stages when they report news.

Teacher-Student Discourse: A Study of Iraqi EFL Classroom Interaction

Abstract 4

A focus on language is obviously important because of its dual education role as both the medium and message of instruction. Colleges as Educational institutions are associated with particular distinctive patterns of language use.

The problem of the study is that there is no effective teacher-student interaction. One of the purposes of education is missing. The students simply cannot develop their communicative skills when their voices are not heard. They also cannot increase their comprehension ability because they do not air their ideas and none listens.

The teacher should encourage natural discourse to occur in the Iraqi EFL university classroom by motivating more equal participation in the negotiation of meaning through various tasks by shifting the focus to the interactional process itself and hence to fluency rather than accuracy.

This study aims at:

1. Arriving at the Iraqi EFL university classroom discourse patterns.

 2. Investigating the influence of the teacher-student's interaction on comprehension ability. Iraqi EFL university learner's

It is hypothesized that:
1. The Iraqi EFL university classroom discourse patterns are rule governed.

2. Teacher-student interaction promotes Iraqi EFL university learning comprehension ability.

The study falls into four chapters. Chapter One is an Introduction which involves a statement of the problem, aims and hypotheses of the study, methods of investigation, and, the model to be adopted, and procedures, significance, limits and design of the study and definition of basic terms. Chapter Two deals with conversational analysis and teacher-student discourse. Chapters Three and four represent data analysis and discussion and give some conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research respectively..

The study concludes that:

1-The Iraqi EFL university classroom discourse is teacher centred.
2- The teacher in EFL university classroom in Iraq has a special status with the authority to manage classroom discourse in terms of content (topic, task) and structure.
3-There is no student elicitation move in the Iraqi EFL university classroom discourse.
4-The teacher's follow-up move in the EFL Iraqi university classroom discourse is positive or negative one, but not argumentative.
5-The EFL university classroom discourse patterns are rule governed.
6-The teacher-student interaction promotes EFL university learning comprehension ability.

A Cognitive Semantic Analysis of Metaphorical and Metonymical Expressions in Selected Political Discourse about COVID-19

Abstract 5

The study is an attempt to investigate the conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymies used in political discourse about COVID-19. The problem of this study is that metaphorical and metonymical expressions help in conveying the meaning successfully and effectively if they understood well by audience. But receiving the metaphorical and metonymical expressions wrongly may lead to misconception of the intended messages. The main questions that the study tries to answer are related to the extent to which metaphors and metonymies are relevant in perceiving the messages in Joe Biden and Boris Johnson's speeches during COVID-19 and how conceptual metaphors and conceptual blending theories can help people to understand the messages in political speeches.

This study aims at identifying how metaphors and metonymies are relevant to understand the messages in Joe Biden and Boris Johnson speeches and to find out how conceptual metaphors and conceptual blending theories can help people to understand the messages in the political speeches about COVID-19. Moreover, it tries to point out that conceptual metaphors in addition to the types of blending networks are common in political speeches about COVID-19. The study hypothesizes that conceptual metaphors and conceptual blending theory are powerful tools for investigating the intended messages in Biden and

Johnson's speeches and there are different processes of blending networks and conceptual mapping that enable the listeners to identify the messages in Biden and Johnson's speeches.

This study conducts qualitative and quantitative analyses of twenty speeches about COVID-19. Ten speeches are said by Joe Biden and ten speeches by Boris Johnson. The selected data have been tackled from the cognitive-semantic perspective by choosing an eclectic model represented by: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and Conceptual Blending Theory

The study concludes that Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory are applicable to the analysis of metaphors and metonymies in political speeches. Their mechanisms can enable listeners to analyze and understand these speeches. Also, the listener can identify and understand the intended meaning in Biden and Johnson's discourse about COVID-19 by using different conceptual networks or conceptual mappings. In addition, choosing appropriate statements via conceptualizing the structure of metaphorical and metonymical expressions based on background knowledge is the key to revealing the intended meaning behind metaphorical and metonymical expressions. Finally, the study concludes that the structural metaphor and double scope networks are the most common types of metaphors and cause effect double networks are the most common types of metonymy.