

# **A Study on Syntactic Errors Experienced by First-Graduate Students of English in the Selected Colleges of Coimbatore with Reference to Active and Passive Voice**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The major reason for choosing this area is to find out the syntactic errors. The reason behind this, sentence with errors will completely change the meaning and it will be harder to understand. More specifically, the purpose of the study is to investigate the problems why the students keep on committing errors, and offer some recommendations and suggestions for the problems. For the present study, first generation graduate students were taken as target learners from selected colleges in Coimbatore. Verb is the heart of the sentence. Without verb we cannot make the sentence. Verbs are either active or passive in voice. First generation-graduate collegians have faced many problems in English grammar transformational skills especially in active and passive voice than non-First generation-graduate students. The objective of the present study is to measure the achievement in grammar competence by giving questionnaire. The selection of the informants is varied from one another with different kinds of location, age, gender, parental education and occupation. This study has been done with both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This study has been limited with Active and Passive voice sentences. Eventually, based on 120 respondents the researcher came to know that there is significance relation between lack of knowledge in grammar and first generation-graduate students. It is hoped that this presentation would help the English learners to find the problems and avoid syntactic errors.

## **KEYWORDS**

Collegians; Syntax; First Generation Graduate; Informants; Grammar and Questionnaire.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The present study is conducted to analyse and offer suggestions for first-generation graduate students in

transformation forms of grammar especially in Active and Passive voice. The reason behind is the students can understand the command in active voice

rather than passive voice. For example instead of saying *open the door*, if we tell *let the door be opened*, students confuse themselves. There are less students using passive sentence structure especially in interrogatives. Sometimes passive voice alone can be used in the academic writing. This influence attempts me in searching about first-generation graduate students learning problems in transformation forms of grammar. This study intends to focus on the problems in active and passive voice.

## II. DEFINITION OF TRANSFORMATION

The root 'trans' refers to change from one level or shape or pattern to other. It simply means change. It also suggests converting from one linguistic feature into another. In grammar transformation refers to morphological, structural or syntactical change.

## III. FIRST-GENERATION GRADUATE STUDENTS

They are the first members in their families to attend college referred to as first-generation graduate students. Educational analysis reports say that undergraduates whose parents never enrolled their higher education in colleges, whose parent's highest level of education is a high school or Diploma or less than that.

## IV. AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aims to encounter and analyse the problems of the students on the transformational skills with reference to active and passive voice.

## V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1.To know the learning difficulties in active and passive voice among the first-generation graduate students.
- 2.To measure the level of achievement in active and passive voice among the first-generation graduate students.
- 3.To offer suggestions for rectifying the learning difficulties in grammar especially in active and passive voice.

## VI. METHODOLOGY ADAPTED FOR THE STUDY

The population of the study includes the students pursuing under graduation in Arts and Science colleges of Coimbatore district. In order to achieve the objectives framed for this study 120 students have been chosen for data collection by adopting purposive sampling method.

## VII. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In grammar, the students have several problems at the tertiary level. There is a lot of evidences convey that language learners like native speakers, pick up grammar points and making mistakes with them in a very predetermined order.

Possible reasons why students keep on making the same mistakes

- They do not think that grammar points are important.
- Grammar points are more difficult for them.
- Confusion between phrase and clause.
- Confusion between coordinate and subordinate conjunctions.
- Memorize without understanding the grammatical rules.
- Inadequate effort of the students in learning the transformation of sentences.
- Lack of understanding in the smaller units of grammar that helps to voices.
- Interference of mother tongue.

## VIII.HYPOTHESIS

The following factors have been chosen by the researcher for analyses and the following factors have close relationship with achievement test. The following factors affect the first-generation students L2 learning.

1. There is significance relationship between the Age and the Achievement of the respondents.

2. There is significant relationship between the Gender and the Achievement of the respondents.

3. There is significant relationship between the Parental Educational Qualification and the Achievement of the respondents.

4. There is significant relationship between the Parental Occupation and the Achievement of the respondents.

5. There is significance relationship between the Location of the Area and the Achievement.

6. There is significance relationship between the Number of Members in the Family and the Achievement of the respondents.

There is significant influence through the Mother Tongue of the learners Achievement.

#### IX. SELECTION OF VARIABLES AND INFORMANTS

The researcher has chosen 120 respondents from different parts of Coimbatore district. For the present study, the researcher has selected the students from five different Arts and Science colleges in the Coimbatore city. The students have been selected not only from English department but also from other

branches. The researcher has given the informants' social background into two broad division namely personal and social parameters. From the personal and social parameters, the selection of the informants are varied from one to another with different kinds of location, age, gender, parental education, number of members in the family etc.

#### X. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The following are the main selection criteria used for the members for the group of the study:

1. Socio background - 18 questions
2. Achievement test - 30 questions
3. Rank correlation - 8 components
4. Level of satisfaction - 15 statements

#### XI. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

##### XI. I Master Table

The following table shows the relation between socio-background of the 120 First-generation graduate students and their score in transformation forms of grammar it is the synthesis of all tables. The Score of the respondents is shown in the following table.

S.No.	Factors	High	Low
1.	Location and Achievement test	48	72
2.	Gender and Achievement test	48	72
3.	Age and Achievement test	47	73
4.	Number of members in the family and Achievement test	47	73
5.	Occupation of the Father and Achievement test	47	73
6.	Parantal educational qualification and Achievement test	47	73

It is observed from the Table 3.2 that out of 47 respondents with high level in achievement test, 48 respondents are from Location factor, 48 respondents are from Gender factor, 47 respondents are

from Age factor, 47 respondents are from Number of members in the family factor, 47 respondents are from Occupation of the father factor and 47 respondents are from Parental educational qualification

factor. In case of 73 respondents with low level in achievement test, 72 respondents are from Location factor, 72 respondents are from Gender factor, 73 respondents are from Age factor, 73 respondents are from

Number of members in the family factor, 73 respondents are from Occupation of the father factor and 73 respondents are from Parental educational qualification factor.

### XI.II Rank Correlation Table

#### Weighed Arithmetic Mean Score

S. No.	Opinions	Weighed Arithmetic Mean	Rank
1	Uninterested	4.19	6
2	Lack of qualifying teacher	3.816	7
3	Lack of practice	5.858	1
4	Memorize without understanding	4.825	3
5	misunderstanding between teacher and student	3.483	8
6	Lack of proper guidance	4.59	4
7	Lack of thorough knowledge in basic grammar	5.09	2
8	Interference of mother tongue	4.308	5

Table shows the degrees of steps in terms of arithmetic mean, showing the various opinions about grammar learning. The first opinion about grammar learning in Lack of practice, followed by Lack of thorough knowledge in basic grammar, Memorize without understanding, Lack of proper guidance, Interference of mother tongue, Uninterested, Lack of qualifying teacher and misunderstanding between teacher and student.

### XII.ERRORS MADE BY THE LEARNERS IN ACTIVE VOICE AND PASSIVE VOICE

#### XII.I Problems in Identification of the Sentences

Identifying the tenses and voices is the initial one to get into voices. Students have often confusions in identifying the sentence. *The book is stolen by Ramesh*, if we ask the question what tense is used in the written example; identify what kind of sentence it is? Then they have problems in

identifying personal and impersonal passive voices.

#### XII.II Difficulties in Finding Object in the Sentence

Lack of thorough knowledge in Transitive and Intransitive verb makes the task tough. E.g. 1. I have a pen.

#### XII.III Problems in Using Subject Verb Agreement

Here, the students have confusions in subject verb agreement after transforming S-O and O-S. They transformed subject and object perfectly but they fail to use are and they use is in the following example.

E.g. He is eating apples. A.V  
Apples is being eaten by him. P.V

The students easily change the subject into object but felt difficulty in the change of verb appropriately because 'Apples'-Third person plural. So the correct passive form is Apples are being eaten by him. (Correct)

#### **XII.IV Tribulations in Using Past Participle of the Present Verb**

E.g. Gopal broke the mirror. A.V

The mirror was broked by Gopal. P.V

Instead of using broken, the students simply add 'ed' at the end of the root verb. These kinds of mistakes arise due to lack of thorough knowledge in strong and weak verb.

#### **XII.V Barriers in Using Appropriate Preposition**

E.g. Jug contains milk (A-V)

Milk is contained by the jug (P-V)  
(Incorrect)

Milk is contained in the jug (P-V)  
(Correct)

E.g. I know him. A.V.

He is known by me. P.V. (Incorrect)

He is known to me. P.V. (Correct)

E.g. Seven days make a week. A.V.

A week is made by seven days. P.V.  
(Incorrect)

A week is made of seven days. P.V.  
(Correct)

Students always use only preposition 'by' but sometimes instead of 'by' some other preposition are used. The above exemplified sentences have shown the different usages.

#### **XII.VI Problems in Tense Transformation**

Using appropriate tense form is very difficult for the students. There is no passive voice formation for 4 tenses. It's impossible for the learners to change three perfect continuous tense namely present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous, future perfect continuous and future continuous tense

##### **1. Simple present:**

A.V. – Sub+Verb+es/s+Object

P.V. – Object+am/is/are+v3+by+Sub.

E.g. I solve the problem. (A.V)

The problem is solved by me. (P.V)

##### **2. Present continuous:**

A.V. – Sub+am/is/are+v1+ing+Object

P.V. –

Object+am/is/are+being+v3+by+Sub.

E.g. The Lion is eating a goat.

A goat is being eaten by the lion

##### **3. Present perfect:**

A.V. –Sub+have/has+v3+Object.

P.V. –

Object+have/has+been+v3+by+Sub

E.g. The Lady has grown a plant.

A plant has been grown by the lady.

##### **4. Simple past:**

A.V. –Sub+v2+Object@for all subjects+v2.

P.V. – Object+was/were+v3+by+Sub.

E.g. My Sister minced the vegetables.

The vegetables were minced by my sister.

##### **5. Past continuous:**

A.V. –Sub+was/were+v+ing+Object.

P.V. –

Object+was/were+being+v3+by+Sub.

E.g. Karthi was eating a cake.

A cake was being eaten by Karthi.

##### **6. Past perfect:**

A.V. –Sub+had+v3+Object.

P.V. – Object+had+been+v3+by+Sub.

E.g. He had closed the window.

The window had been closed by him.

##### **7. Simple future:**

A.V. –Sub+will/shall+v1+Object.

P.V. –

Object+will/shall+be+v3+by+Sub.

E.g. We shall sell the flowers.

The flowers will be sold by us.

##### **8. Future perfect:**

A.V. –

Subject+will/shall+have+v3+Object.

P.V. –

Object+will/shall+have+been+v3+by+Sub  
ject.

E.g. She will have bought a pen

A pen will have been bought by her.

#### **XII. VII Problems in Changing Prepositional Phrase**

E.g. While changing a prepositional verb form active to passive voice, the preposition should not be dropped. Manimaran brings up a child.

A child is brought up by Manimaran.

### **XII.VIII Problems in Sentence Pattern, Interrogatives and Imperatives**

- Problems in changing interrogative sentence

It is also called as question forms.

Interrogative sentences

Yes/no questions wh. Questions

#### **a) yes/no Questions:**

A.V. Does Subitha sing a song?

P.V. Is a song sung by Subitha?

A.V. Didn't Preethi take pan cakes?

P.V. Were pan cakes not taken by Preethi?

#### **b) Wh. Questions:**

E.g.1. when did you pay the fee?

When was the fee paid by you?

2. Single object-starting with 'who':

A.V. Who gave this pen?

P.V. By whom was this pen given?

3. Using double object – starting with 'who':

E.g. Who taught you French?

By whom were you taught French?

E.g. When did you teach him Latin?

When was he taught Latin by you?

(Incorrect)

When was Latin taught to him by you?  
(Correct)

Imperative sentence contains, command, order, requests, asked, urged, pleaded. It has been divided into two namely positive and negative.

#### ○ **Command:**

E.g. write the paragraph –A.V.

Let the paragraph be written –P.V.

#### ○ **In case of starting sentence with 'Please':**

Please do it.

Let it be done kindly.

You are requested to do it.

#### ○ **Negative sentence:**

E.g. don't touch the wire.

Let not the wire be touched.

#### ○ **In case of starting sentence with 'let':**

E.g. Let us complete the work.

Let our work be completed by us.

Formula: Let+object+be+v3+by+etc.,

### **Ø Modals:**

A.V. can, could, should, would, may, might, must, ought to, need to, has to, have to, had to, dare to, is going to +verb.

P.V. same modals+be+v3+by+Object.

E.g. I can eat 20 cakes.

20 Cakes can be eaten by me.

#### ○ **Omission of the agent with 'by':**

When the 'by' is omitted in passive voice we can find out it is a passive voice with the help of "past participle".

P.V. – Sub+is+v3+Object

A.V. – Object+v1+Subject

E.g. English is spoken all over the world.

People speak English all over the world.

E.g. Rice is eaten all over Tamilnadu

People eat rice all over Tamilnadu

### **XII.IX Problems in Changing Infinitives and Modals**

E.g. He is going to marry her.

She is going to be married by him.

E.g. They made the students do the work

The students were made to do the work.

They have confusions which verb should be turned into Past participle. In the 1<sup>st</sup> example non-finite verb has transformed into passive construction and at the same time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> example finite verb has transformed into passive construction.

E.g. He will eat 20 cakes.

20 cakes will be eaten by him.

Students lack in knowledge to differentiate the future continuous and modals.

### **XII.X Problems in Transforming Compound Sentence**

Students easily change a simple sentence and with an object. They confused while changing double object in a sentence or the sentence contains with two main clauses.

E.g. The teacher is taking the class and the students are listening to the class.

The class is being taken by the teacher and the class is being listened by the students.

### **XII.XI Problems in Transforming Double Object in a Sentence**

E.g. My father gave me a pen.

A pen was given by my father to me.

A pen was given me by my father.

I was given a pen by my father.

### **XII. XII Problems in Transforming Preposition and Adverb Participles in Active Sentence**

Ø Preposition and adverb participles used after verbs in active sentence cannot be left out.

E.g. We will look into the whole issue.

The whole issue will be looked into.

E.g. Somebody is knocking at the door.

The door is being knocked at by somebody.

E.g. We should do away with such practices.

Such practices should be done away with.

### **XII. XIII Conclusion**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the problems of the first-generation students and syntactic errors which they committed and faced in transformation forms of grammar especially in Active voice and Passive voice. The study of literature is more focused than grammar, even though they have 25% of grammar part in their syllabus. In findings the researchers analysed the problems and found that tertiary level student gave less importance to transformation forms of grammar. If one comes across mentioned sub headings while learning voices, one can solve the tribulations in using voices.

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