

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
جامعة ديالى / كلية التربية / الأصمعي

**أداء طلبة الثانوية العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية  
لغة أجنبية في مجال المبني للمجهول: المشاكل والبرنامج**

**العلاجي**

رسالة

تقدمت بها الطالبة

**إيمان أحمد حسون السعدي**

إلى

مجلس كلية التربية / جامعة ديالى / الأصمعي

وهي جزء من متطلبات نيل درجة الماجستير في تربية طرائق تدريس اللغة  
الإنكليزية

بإشراف

**الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور خليل إسماعيل رجية**

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University of Diyala  
Iraqi EFL Secondary School Students'  
Performance in The Area of Passivization:  
Problems and Remedial Work

A Thesis

**SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL  
OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF DIYALA IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS**

For

The Degree of Master of Education

In

Methods of Teaching English As

A Foreign Language

By

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## 1.1 The Problem and Its Significance

Rutherford (1987: 1) argues that "through grammar the learner can make words effective and become master of his grammatical environments".

Huebener (1969: 98) defines grammar as "the syntactical structure of a language".

Haegeman and Gueron (1999: 583) state that the grammar of a language generates the sentences of that language. It specifies to each sentence a set of representations which give the formal description of some of the properties (semantic, syntactic, morphological, etc).

Each grammatical category has its own features, linguistic complexities and difficulties. So the quality and quantity of students' mistakes differ from one grammatical category to another. (Ibid)

The term "voice" is used to describe a major verb category that distinguishes an active verb phrase (e.g. wrote) from a passive one (e.g. was written), i.e., the passive adds a form of the auxiliary "be" followed by the past participle of the main verb, while the active does not contain that construction.

In English verbs can be either transitive or intransitive depending on their context in the sentence. In a language where a passive voice exists a transitive verb can be passivized, whereas an intransitive one cannot be passivized. Changing from the active into the passive requires the following steps:

- The active subject becomes the passive agent.
- The active object becomes the passive subject.
- The preposition "by" is presented before the agent.

E.g. :

1. Brown *respected* Mary. (Active)

2. Mary *was respected* by Brown. (Passive)

Although the corresponding active and passive sentences seem to be radically different, but the relations of the meaning between them still the same, the two examples above have the same truth value as in Brown respected Mery and Mery was respected by Brown, **Brown** in both cases is the performer of the action even though structurally **Brown** has a very different position and function in each. (Quirk et al., 1985: 159-166) and (Martin 1991: 441).

Crystal (1988a: 380) indicates that the passive is the most noticeable and powerful phenomenon in scientific and technical writing. Since science is mostly concerned with the activity, so that using passive voice will make the description to be done impersonally without an agent to be expressed.

It has been believed that Iraqi EFL secondary school students encounter difficulties in the recognition and production of passive sentences. As it has been revealed by findings of relevant studies and fields of experience of education, these difficulties may be due to various reasons pedagogically. This area lacks attention it requires either because of the inadequacy of English syllabus or because this structural phenomenon is dealt with in passing with a scant exercises and text books fail to provide learning opportunities for the distinction of the active and the passive. Therefore this study is intended to explore this area and highlight the difficulties encountered by Iraqi EFL secondary school students and to suggest remedial work for the alleviation of these difficulties.

## **1.2 Aims**

The study aims at:

1. investigating the ability of Iraqi EFL secondary school students to recognize and produce passive sentences and finding out area of difficulty in this respect, and
2. suggesting remedial work for the alleviation of these difficulties.

## **1.3 Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

1. Iraqi EFL secondary school students fail to master the recognition and production of passive sentences.
2. Iraqi EFL secondary school students encounter more difficulty at the production level, than at the recognition one.

## **1.4 Limits**

This study is limited to the fifth grade from AL- Zahraa secondary school in diyala governorate during the academic year 2008-2009, concerning passivization in English.

## **1.5 Value**

The current study is hoped to be of value to:

1. Iraqi EFL secondary school teachers to pinpoint the difficulties in the investigated area.

2. Syllabus designers to take the findings of the current study into consideration in drawing suitable methods in teaching passivization.

## **1.6 Definitions of Basic Terms**

The following basic terms are defined as they are used in the current study.

### **1. EFL students**

Generally speaking, EFL students are those students of English whose access to the language is limited to the classroom and the teaching materials, i.e., they have no contact with the language outside the school. In the current study the term refers to Iraqi secondary school students.

### **2. Secondary school**

Good (1973: 434) defines it as "a school, the purpose of which is preparation of students for entrance to another educational institution, especially college".

In Iraq it refers to that part of a secondary school that follows the intermediate. It covers three years. In its second year, the specialization into science and literary divisions begins.

Performance: is the ability to understand and produce speech and writing, this what linguists call performance. Students' knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and sound, is useless if they cannot specifically say or comprehend anything.

(Fromkin and Rodman 1998: 532)

### 3. Passivization

It is said that verbs can be either active or passive in voice. The passive form of a verb is the result of the combination of verb "to be" and the past participle of the main verb. Generally, the passive auxiliary is normally "be".

The passive is often used when it is unnecessary to mention the doer of the action. (Quirk et al., 1985: 160)

### 4. Remedial Work

Sesnan (1997: 168) defines it as "the work which you have to do with the pupils to repair their language".

Remedial work will help to diagnose parts of language which are not well learned and this will lead us to spend more time on these parts to achieve good standard of learning English language.

## ABSTRACT

The current study is concerned with passivization. The aim of the instruction in English grammar is to help students to use English correctly and accurately.

The study aims at:

1. Investigating the ability of Iraqi EFL secondary school students to recognize and produce passive sentences, and finding out areas of difficulty in this respect.
2. Suggesting remedial work for the alleviation of these difficulties.

It is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL secondary school learners fail to master the recognition and production of passive sentences.

The study covers both theoretical and practical aspects. The theoretical aspect deals with the survey of the topic. It begins with the definition and classification of passive voice in general, and then presents in detail the definition, form, types, and usage of passive voice.

To fulfill the practical aspect, i.e., to achieve test aim and to verify the hypothesis, 100 female students of the fifth grade from Al- Zahraa' secondary school in Diyala during the academic year 2008-2009 are randomly chosen to present the sample of the study.

An achievement test which covers both recognition and production levels (20 items to test recognition and 30 items to test production) has been constructed to fulfill the aim of the study in investigating EFL secondary school students' ability in recognizing and producing passive sentences.

Then the test is exposed to jury members to verify its validity.



T-test, person correlation coefficient formula are used throughout the procedures and results analysis.

The T-test for one sample has been used to find out whether there is any significant difference between the computed T-value and the tabulated one. Person correlation coefficient is adopted to estimate reliability of the test.

The statistical analysis of the data has yielded the following major results: the subjects have failed to identify and produce passive sentences on the whole test. Moreover, subjects' recognition ability is higher than their production ability according to the analysis of the items.

In the light of these results, relevant conclusions are drawn and a number of recommendations and remedial work for the alleviation of these difficulties are forwarded; besides, suggestions are made for further studies.

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