DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES TO MASTER ACTIVE/PASSIVE VOICE AND REPORTED SPEECH IN ESL LEARNERS

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Abstract

The importance of English grammar in ESL learning cannot be ignored as English grammar is the foundation of English language upon which the language is constructed. English grammar leads perfection in English while learning as second language in the context of LSRW. "Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language." (Angela Ackerman). Active & passive and Reported speech are two most vital aspects of English grammar that assist in vitrifying English proficiency, particularly writing skills. Mastering Active Passive Voice and Reported speech poses some difficulties for ESL learners as both topics include complex rules. After learning Active & Passive Voice and Reported speech, ESL learners get confused while converting sentence, as the blend of complex rules get mixed up in the mind and becomes a barrier in mastering these topics. The study identifies common errors and sources by which learners get confused through error analysis and literature review as well as investigates the development and implementation of instructional strategies suitable to enhance understanding. Implementation of these strategies within ESL classrooms evaluates the effectiveness through assessments and feedbacks.

Keywords: Reported speech, Passive voice, ESL, Instructional strategies, Grammar, Complex rules

1.   INTRODUCTION

It is essential for ESL learners to master English grammar to acquire accuracy and proficiency in English language skills. The importance of grammatical structures can be observed within written and spoken communication also these structures play a significant role in academic and professional context. Active voice is used to show clarity and directness that makes it essential for effective communication, while passive voice shifts focus onto the action rather than doer, presenting flexibility in sentence structure. Reported speech allows speaker to convey the speech indirectly that was spoken by someone else, maintaining clarity in narratives and dialogues. ESL learners often confront challenges in making distinction between these structures and grammatical rules due to complexities and linguistic differences.

Error analysis studies, such as those conducted by Selinker (1972) and Dulay and Burt (1974) reveal consistent difficulties such as incorrect tense usage, misplaced subject-object relationships, and challenges is narrative coherence. These difficulties show the necessity for instructional strategies by which rules can be clarified, provide ample opportunities, and encourage practical application. This research aims to address these challenges by developing and implementing effective instructional strategies suitable as per need of ESL learners. This research aims to investigate following questions:

1.   What are the common errors ESL learners make when using Active & Passive and Reported Speech?
2.   How do ESL learners get confused while using rules for Active & Passive and Reported Speech?
3.   What instructional strategies can be utilized effectively to differentiate and teach Passive voice and Reported Speech?

It was observed within an ESL classroom that learners commonly get stuck while transforming the sentences due to complexities in grammatical rules. Using some of the Active & Passive rules while converting into indirect speech and Reported Speech rules while converting into Passive voice is a common and consistent error among ESL learners. These difficulties mandate the development of effective instructional strategies to bridge the gap between understanding and application. Ultimately, this research seeks to provide practical solutions that can be utilized by educators in order to improve accuracy and proficiency in their students. The findings from this study will contribute to the field of language and linguistics, providing some strategies and implications for overcoming complexities regarding grammatical rules among learners. By exploring existing literature, this research identifies best instructional strategies in teaching Active & Passive and Reported Speech.

Objectives

1. Identify the specific challenges ESL learners face with active & passive voice and reported speech.
2. Develop instructional strategies to overcome these challenges.
3. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes mixed-methods approach including questionnaire, assessments and past studies. The research begins with a pre-assessment to identify common errors and area of confusion among learners. Based on error analysis, suitable instruction strategies were developed. The effectiveness of these strategies evaluated through post assessment and students' feedback. Secondary data was collected through books, research papers, and previous studies.

3. AREA OF RESEARCH

This research study was limited to Jaipur city. The study took place within ESL classrooms involving 85 students pursuing technical or non-technical courses.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The challenge of mastering Active & Passive and Reported Speech has been major point of many studies, focusing on intricate relationship between English grammar and instructional strategies. Brown (2000) emphasizes that deep understanding of learners' cognitive processes and incorporation of instructional strategies is required for effective language teaching that cater to the processes. Ellis (2008) argues that explicit instruction and practice is essential in order to acquire grammatical structures, supported by a robust theoretical understanding of language learning mechanisms. This viewpoint is recited by Lightbown and Spada (2013), who suggest that deliberate practice and corrective feedback are crucial that help learners internalize complex grammatical rules.

Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis further emphasizes on the need for exposure to comprehensible input, suggesting that learners take advantage from contexts where these grammatical structures are used meaningfully. Integrating Krashen's insights, Long and Richards (2016) highlights instructional strategies that blend explicit grammar teaching with rich, meaningful input, thereby providing learners with opportunities to encounter and use target structures in varied contexts. This approach aligns with Swan's (2005) practical recommendations for teaching grammar, which mounts pressure on the importance of contextualized practice and the use of real-life examples to illustrate grammatical rules.

In addition, research by Robinson (2002) on individual differences in language learning highlights the importance of suitable instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners. This is particularly relevant for teaching active/passive voice and reported speech, as learners may differ widely in their capacity to comprehend these concepts. Implementing differentiated instruction and offering varied practice activities can effectively help address these individual differences, promoting more effective learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the role of motivation, as discussed by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), cannot be disregarded. They argue that motivated learners are more likely to engage with challenging grammatical structures and make persistent efforts to master them. Thus, creating a supportive and motivating learning environment is essential for successful grammar instruction.

Finally, Corder (1973) and Selinker (1972) introduce the concept of interlanguage, which describes that learners develop an dynamic linguistic system influenced by both native language and the target language. Understanding this concept can help educators anticipate common errors in active/passive voice and reported speech, enabling for more focused and effective instructional strategies.

Overall, the literature emphasizes the importance of a multifaceted approach to teaching active/passive voice and reported speech in ESL learners. Combining explicit instruction, meaningful input, corrective feedback, and motivational strategies, while considering individual differences and interlanguage development, can lead to more effective mastery of these complex grammatical structures.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The pre-assessment of students revealed noticeable syntactic conflation error where the rules of active/passive voice were incorrectly applied in reported speech while converting and vice versa. The results indicate misunderstanding of how to properly transform sentences between these grammatical structures. The observed errors point to a broader issue of combining multiple syntactic rules, suggesting that students face challenge in making distinction between the rules. This confusion leads inaccuracies that affect learners'

command over English grammar. The findings highlight the need for suitable strategies designed to overcome syntactic conflation error.

FIGURE 1: Represents the evolution of syntactic conflation error in RS
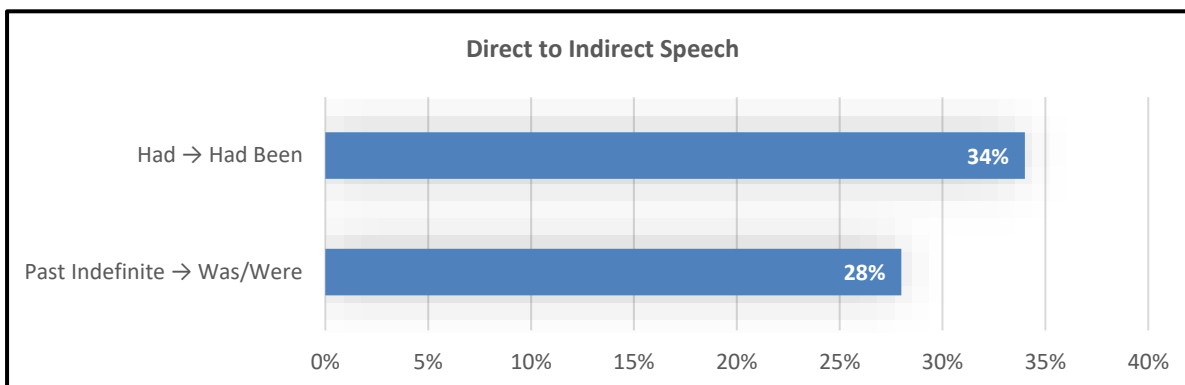
The pre-assessment revealed syntactic conflation errors that reflected multiple times. Out of all students who appeared, 33% students incorrectly transformed "Have" into passive form "Had." Similarly, 42% of the students mistakenly transformed "Will" to "Would". 37% of the students changed "Can" to "Could." All above mentioned examples showing syntactic conflation errors as rules applied in passive conversion are implemented in reported speech that were mistakenly used in active/passive voice due to mix-up of complex rules, the analysis is shown above in figure 2.

FIGURE 2: Represents the evolution of syntactic conflation error in PV
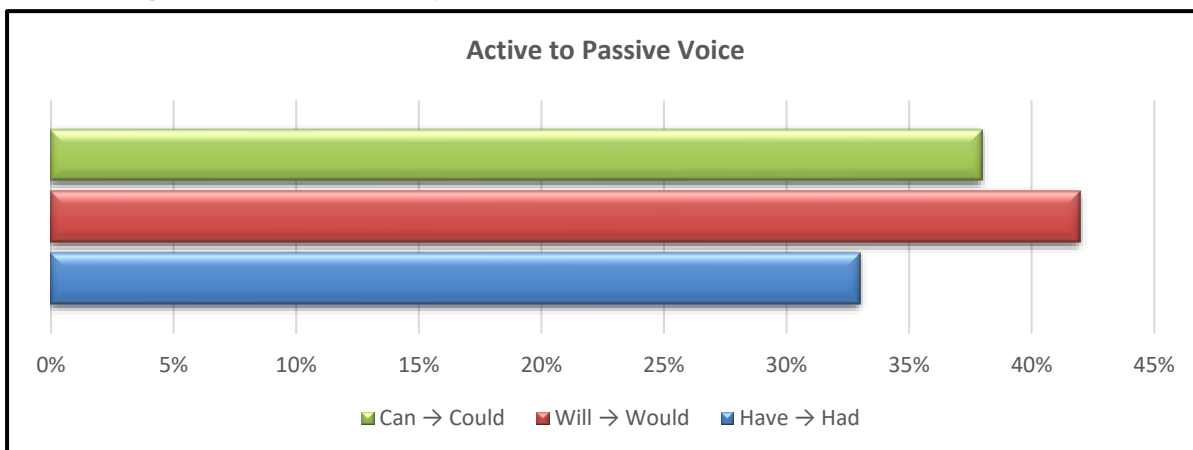
Errors were also clear in reported speech transformations, where 28% of the students converted "Past indefinite" sentence using "was/were" in indirect speech. Moreover, 34% of the students incorrectly converted "Had" to "Had been". The analysis of reported speech is reflected in figure 1.

FIGURE 3: Represents transformations in PV and RS for rectifying Syntactic Conflation Errors-

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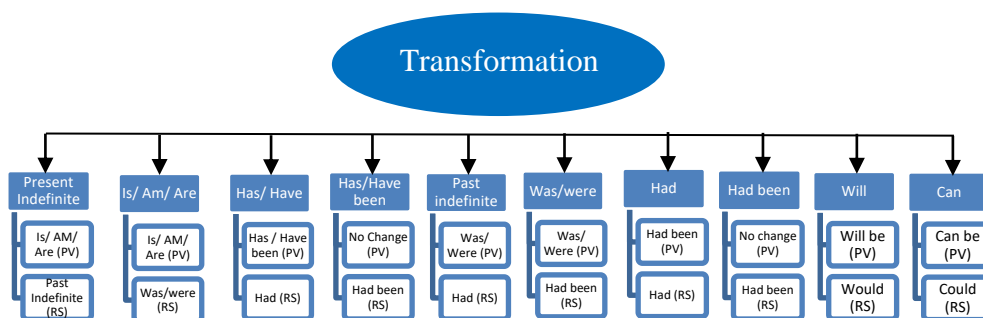
The instructional model was developed to overcome syntactic conflation error in active/passive voice and reported speech focuses on a systematic mapping of verb tenses and their transformation. The model helps students internalize the rules and reduces the likelihood of conflating syntactic structures, thereby enhancing their grammatical accuracy in both active/passive and reported speech.

5.1. Instruction strategies to overcome teaching implications

In order to effectively address syntactic conflation errors, some combined practice approaches were utilized. These techniques include exercises that require students to transform sentences through various grammatical transformations. By engaging in these practices, students become adept at recognizing and applying correct grammatical rules. This methodological approach not only increase understanding of grammatical rules but also enhances the ability to overcome conflation of complex grammatical rules. Ultimately reducing errors and improving accuracy. Combined practice approach includes following techniques:

5.1.1. Integrated Sentence Transformation

This technique involves creating exercises where students are required to transform a set of sentences from one form to another. For instance, students might convert sentence from active to passive voice and then into reported speech.

5.1.2. Dialogue Transform

In this technique, students are provided with dialogues in direct speech. They must convert the dialogue into passive voice where applicable and then report the entire dialogue in reported speech.
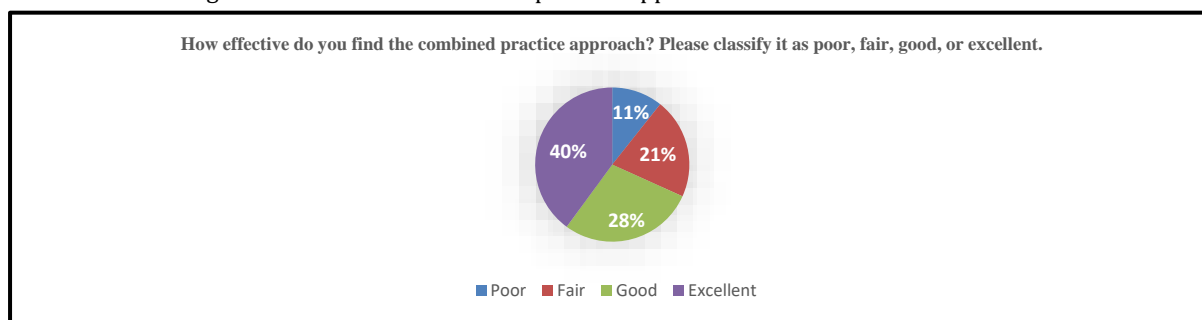
Table 1: Elaborates combined practice approaches-

Technique	Original Sentence	Passive Voice	Reported Speech
Integrated Sentence Transformation	The professor explains the topic.	The topic is explained by the professor.	He said that the topic was explained by the professor.
Dialogue Transformation	John: 'I will prepare the report tomorrow.'	The report will be prepared by John tomorrow.	John said that the report would be prepared by him the next day.

5.2. Effectiveness of Combined Practice Approaches

Following the implementation of the combined practice approaches, there was a marked improvement in students' management of syntactic conflation errors. The structured exercises provided a diverse learning environment that facilitated the effective internalization of grammatical rules. Key outcomes included an enhanced understanding of grammatical constructs, as evidenced by increased accuracy in post-assessment. Students showed a significant reduction in syntactic conflation errors, particularly with complex forms like passive voice, and reported speech. Additionally, engagement in conversion chains not only improved grammatical proficiency but also boosted students' level of aplomb. Positive student feedback reflected the engaging nature of these techniques, while quantitative analysis through post assessment revealed a 30% reduction in error rates and notable progress in assessments on active/passive voice and reported speech. The figures below display students' feedback on the effectiveness of the combined practice approach.

FIGURE 4: Showing the most effective combined practice approach

How effective do you find the combined practice approach? Please classify it as poor, fair, good, or excellent.

Poor 11% | Fair 21% | Good 28% | Excellent 40%

According to Figure 4, students' feedback are as follows: 11% rated the approach as poor, 21% as fair, 28% as good, and 40% as excellent. This indicates a predominantly positive response, with most students recognizing the approach as effective.

FIGURE 5: Displaying student responses to the effectiveness of the combined practice approach
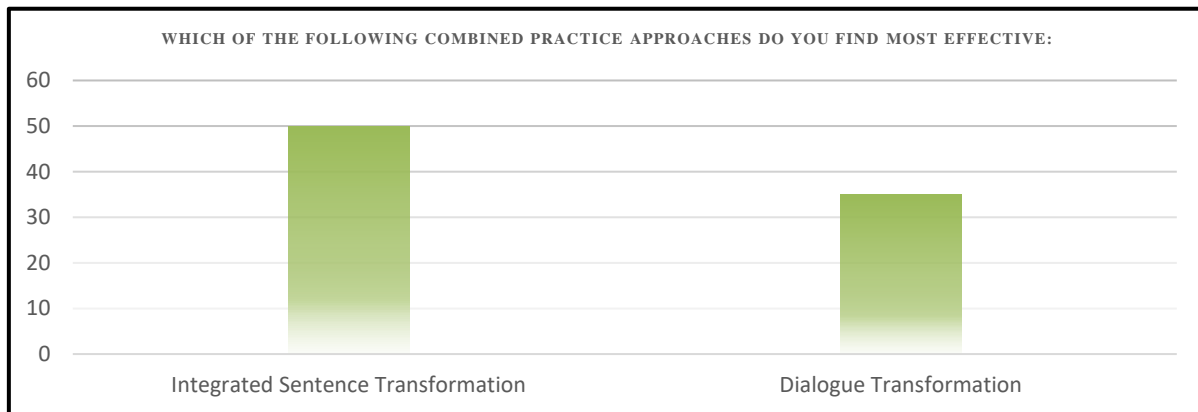

Figure 5 further details students' preferences for specific methods within the combined practice approach. It reveals that Integrated Sentence Transformation was considered significantly more effective than Dialogue Transformation by a majority of students.

6.   CONCLUSION

This study has examined a detailed analysis of various pedagogical approaches, including the combined practice approach, it is clear that targeted instructional strategies significantly enhance students' understanding of these complex grammatical structures. The findings suggest that integrating methods such as Integrated Sentence Transformation and Dialogue Transformation can effectively tackle the syntactic conflation error faced by ESL learners. The positive feedback from students highlights the effectiveness of these strategies in improving grammatical proficiency. Specifically, the preference for Integrated Sentence Transformation indicates its superior impact in enhancing understanding and application. This highlights the importance of selecting and customizing instructional methods to meet the specific needs of learners, thereby promoting more effective language acquisition. In conclusion, the implementation of well-designed instructional strategies is crucial for advancing ESL learners' mastery of Active/Passive Voice and Reported Speech. Future research should continue to explore and refine these strategies to further enhance their effectiveness and adapt to diverse learning contexts.

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