ISELT-4
2016

THE GRAMMATICAL-SEMANTIC PROPERETIES OF ENGLISH MEDIO-PASSIVES: HOW NECESSARY ARE THEY FOR EFL LEARNERS IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES?[3]

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Abstract
Although learning a foreign language means learning to communicate in the language, it does not mean that to study and to understand the grammatical-semantic features of the learnt language are not essential. Most EFL learners in Indonesia, for instance, have academically known the grammatical-semantic properties of English actives and passives. However, it is assumed that not all EFL learners in multilingual societies academically know and cognitively understand the grammatical-semantic properties of one more phenomenon of English voice so called medio-passive constructions. Medio-passive constructions are grammatically constructed in active forms, but they are semantically understood as passive ones. This paper, which is derived and further developed based on a research report conducted in 2012 (Mukhaiyar an Jufrizal, 2012), particularly discusses: (i) the grammatical-semantic properties of English medio-passive constructions; and (ii) how they are academically and communicatively necessary for EFL learners in multilingual societies, as in Indonesia. The data presented in this paper are selected from those collected in a research conducted in 2012 and added with the relevant ones collected along with the writer did his activities in teaching English at S1 and S2 study programs of Universitas Negeri Padang. The analysis toward the data and its discussion are based on the relevant theories of linguistic typology of voice systems of English and foreign language learning, especially learning EFL for multi-lingual societies.

Keywords: *English, voice, active, passive, medio-passive, linguistic typology, multilingual*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is not "a question" anymore that linguistic studies and findings are really needed to construct and to develop linguistic theories and to supply linguistic and grammatical data for the programs of language teaching. Language data and linguistic features are practically used in any programs of language teaching and learning processes, moreover in foreign language learning. Following Valdman's, Corder's, and Spolsky's, Stern (1994:174), in relation to the idea, states that a linguist may seek validity in a coherent and consistent linguistic theories, while a language teacher judges a theory for its usefulness in the design of materials, in curriculum development, or in instruction. Different linguistic theories may offer different perspectives on language, and they can be treated as equivalent resources. It can be claimed as well that the descriptions of language made by linguists can be academically 'applied' in the sense that they provide the data needed for writing teaching grammar, course book, dictionary, and other materials for language teaching and learning.

It is also reasonable to argue that the programs of linguistic studies and those of language teaching and learning (language instruction) should mutually work cooperatively in order to have better results. It is sure that academic and theoretical foundations of language instruction need data and information provided by linguists based on linguistic studies. Linguistic data and information supplied by various studies of linguistics reveal that grammatical features of human languages convey different semantic and pragmatic properties. Those are not only universal for all human

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languages, but also unique and specific. Therefore, the programs of learning a language, moreover learning a second language (L2) or a foreign language (FL) should pay serious attention to the grammatical features of the learnt language.

Among the others, voice system in one particular language is one of so many linguistic phenomena which need serious attentions in order to know specific grammatical features of the language. Typologically, as a nominative-accusative language, English grammatically differentiate the active and passive clause constructions as the grammatical constructions based on voice system. Most learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia have already been introduced that English has active and passive constructions. At the intermediate and advanced levels of learning the EFL, it has been academically known that the passive clause construction in English is grammatically indicated by the general formula: *BE + Past Participle* and *GET PASSIVE*. The followings are the examples of passives which have been well known by EFL learners and it is believed that they are in sufficient understanding on their relevant constructions in active ones (adopted from Parrott, 2001).

(1) *The conference <u>was badly organized</u>*.
(2) *Several protesters <u>were taken away by the police</u>*.
(3) *I think Helen is going to <u>be appointed Chair of the Commission</u>*.
(4) *I finally <u>got admitted to hospital</u>*.
(5) *I am not going to <u>get tricked</u>*.

The following active constructions, however, must be semantically understood as the passive ones (see also Jufrizal, 2013).

(6) *It <u>happens</u> everyday, sir*.
(7) *Your idea <u>sounded controversial</u>, but we were …*
(8) *It <u>seems</u> that you are not ready for that moment*.
(9) *The golden window <u>opened</u> only twice a year*.
(10) Reservoir<u>fills with</u> *tap water like in the left position*.

In the teaching learning processes of EFL in Indonesia, it is frequently found, both in speaking and writing, many learners use the following constructions, instead (Mukhaiyar and Jufrizal, 2012; Jufrizal, 2013).

(6*) *It <u>is happened</u> everyday, sir*.
(7*) *Your <u>idea was sounded</u> controversial, but we were …*
(8*) *It <u>is seemed</u> that you are not ready for that moment*.
(9*) *The golden window <u>was opened</u> only twice a year*.
(10*) *Reservoir <u>is filled</u> with tap water like in the left position*.

As it has been claimed by Jufrizal (2013, 2015) the English clause constructions (6) – (10), which are linguistically called by some linguists as mediopassive constructions, are not seriously introduced and discussed in EFL classroom. That is right that such constructions do not follow the grammatical rules of passive voice; they are in the grammatical rules of active voice but they should be semantically comprehended as passive ones. According to Hundt (2007), this is one of the common styles of English. Due to the stylistic construction, the mediopassive constructions may have an extra explanation in the programs of EFL learning in multilingual societies, as in Indonesia.

The constructions like (6*) – (10*), in nature, are not common in English, although they "formally" follow the formula of English passive voice. They are commonly appeared as the "passive sense" expressed by Indonesian learners of EFL. It occurs naturally as the consequence of language interference from bahasa Indonesia into EFL. The phenomena of mediopassive constructions are the English style, but they become academic problems faced by EFL learners in Indonesia at almost all levels (see further Jufrizal, 2013, 2015). The linguistic and stylistic phenomena of the mediopassive constructions should be academically seen as the matters which are essential in the learning of EFL grammar, moreover at university level. It implies that the learners of EFL at post-intermediate and advanced level need to academically comprehend the nature of mediopassive constructions in the foreign language.

This paper, which is derived and further developed based on a research report conducted in 2012 (Mukhaiyar an Jufrizal, 2012), particularly discusses: (i) the grammatical-semantic properties of English medio-passive constructions; and (ii) how they are academically and communicatively necessary for EFL learners in multilingual societies, as in Indonesia. The data presented in this paper

are selected from those collected in a research conducted in 2012 and added with the relevant ones collected along with the writer did his activities in teaching English at S1 and S2 study programs of Universitas Negeri Padang. The analysis toward the data and its discussion are based on the relevant theories of linguistic typology of voice systems of English and foreign language learning, especially learning EFL for multilingual societies.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES
1. The Nature of Mediopassive Constructions in English

Traditionally, it is simply stated by Shibatani (in Kulikov and Vater (eds.), 1998:117) that the term voice refers to the name for a verbal form according as it primary expresses the action or state with regard to its subject, which may be represented as acting (active voice), undergoing (passive voice), or affected by its own action (reflexive [middle] voice). Whereas this and other traditional views see the opposition between active and passive in terms of whether the subject represents an actor (agent), or an undergoer (patient), consideration of the so-called impersonal passives would require a slightly broader view of the passive category if it were to embrace both personal and impersonal passives, both which in fact stand in opposition to active forms (see also Shibatani in Shibatani (ed.), 1988:3). The fundamental opposition of the three categories of voice system in human languages cross-linguistically can be illustrated as:

(i) *active category*   : action occurs under the subject's control

(ii) *passive category*   : action occurs not under the subject's control but under that of another entity apart from the subject.

(iii) *middle category*   : action occurs under the subject's control and its development is confined within the sphere of the subject.

In accordance with these, most linguists use these three voice system categories (active voice, passive voice, and middle voice) to indicate the types of clause constructions typologically, especially grammatical typology. These three types of voice are naturally possessed by nominative-accusative languages, such as English. These grammatical features belong to the formal style of language. Meanwhile, the non-formal style of language may have the same grammatical construction as one of the three voice systems but it has different semantic sense. That is the case that different language styles can influence semantic and pragmatic meanings of language. It is caused by the phenomena that style in the use of language is an intuition of the speakers. In this sense, Darbyshire (1971:11), for instance, states that the intuition is simply that there are varieties of language-uses which are felt, but not made explicit, in some vaguely social and non-linguistic way; speakers use language in a different way from that which they would use in ordinary conversation.

Coming back to the examples (6 – 10) in part A above, the constructions are the 'deviation' of grammatical ones; the grammatical constructions are in active voice but semantically it has passive senses. This type of clause constructions may have something to do with language styles and practical uses socio-cultrually. These "fascinating" constructions are linguistically called by linguists as the mediopassive constructions (see for instance Hundt, 2007). According to Hundt (2007:1 – 3), mediopassive constructions in English can be relatively fascinating and stylistic. The fact is that a verb in the active voice without any additional morphological marking can be used a functional notion that is neither clearly active nor a straightforward passive. Furthermore, mediopassive constructions are also of interest because they are a potential source of variation between different national varieties of English in the world. For examples, New Zealanders and Australians often say that a television programme *screens*, Americans prefer to say *air*, and British speakers tend to use *show*. Following Legenhausen's, Hundt (2007:3) states that mediopassive construction is described as a marginal structural type, which flourishes mainly in special registers. It is liable to show varying degrees of conventionalization, pattern irregularities and individual idiosyncrasies.

Due to the stylistic and irregular constructions, it is assumed that the linguistic and theoretical discussions on medipassive constructions are relatively difficult and problematic for many EFL learners in multilingual societies, such as in Indonesia. The mediopassive constructions are theoretically related to the complex phenomena of voice systems; the mediopassive construction has something to do with active, passive, and middle-passive voices. Semantically, it also has

semantic relations with the ergative constructions, the basic clause constructions in ergative-absolutive languages. This paper, however, does not theoretically discuss all aspects of mediopassive constructions as linguists do, but it just introduces the basic-general views of the grammatical-semantic properties of mediopassive constructions in English as the bases for the discussion of the nature of these constructions in English and how they are necessary for EFL learners in multilingual societies.

According to Hundt (2007:7), syntactic aspects that are important for the description of mediopassives include transitivity and voice, (adverbial) modification, aspectual restrictions, and the relation between mediopassive and reflexive constructions. Typically, the object of the transitive pattern occurs in subject position in a mediopassive construction. Another important characteristic of mediopassive constructions is that they are morphologically active but semantically passive-like. They are not straightforward passives semantically because the subject-NP in mediopassive typically shares in the responsibility for the action expressed by the verb: often, a property inherent in the subject-NP facilities the action. What are dealing with it is thus not only simply a question of morphology or syntax but an aspect at the interface between syntax and semantics.

Hundt (2007:7) adds that in clear-cut cases of mediopassive constructions, the verb is modified either by an adverb (as in (11) and (12)) or by a modal verb (as in (13) and (14)).

(11)   *Sealed controls wipe clean easily.*
(12)   *Morton's newest product turns out to sell as well as its stock did.*
(13)   *… an uncommitted Ø −role may assign freely to any available GF.*
(14)   *Scraps of fleece may combine to make a multi-colored fleece hat.*

It is essential to know that mediopassives in English are formally similar with the ergatives. Hundt (2007:11 – 16) mentions that there are three apparent restrictions on mediopassives formation in English which have been used to distinguish between mediopassives and ergatives (verbs like *open, freeze*, and *break*). They are (i) the need for (adverbial) modification; (ii) temporal-aspectual restrictions, and (iii) the implication of an external agent. Unlike mediopassives, ergatives can be used intransitively without modification and in non-generic contexts. They also usually do not imply an external agent. The mediopassives may occur with or without (adverbial) modification; they do not occur intransitively as ergatives do. Medio-passives all focus on inherent properties or design features of the NPs in subject position. The followings are the examples of ergative constructions in English.

(15)   *The door opened.*
(16)   *The slush had frozen over night.*
(17)   *The vase broke.*

Temporal-aspectual restrictions are apparently another feature of mediopassive construct-ions. Unlike ergtives, mediopassives do not readily combine with past tense marking or the progressive aspect. Why should this be the case? The fact that mediopassives typically focus on inherent properties of the NP in subject position makes them into generic statements. In other words, mediopassive constructions do not normally refer to events in time; they are non-eventive. Let's see the following!

(18)   *… polyethylene crystallizes readily and cannot be quenched rapidly enough to …*

The third feature that is used to distinguish mediopassive constructions from ergatives is the notion of 'agency'. In the mediopassives, the actor role is implied, but in ergatives it is "completely" eliminated. English mediopassives have an implicit argument that is typically an agent, but there is no implied agent in ergative constructions because they – unlike medio-passives – can combine with the phrase *all by itself* (see (19)).

(19)   *The boat sank all by itself.*

However, the notion of an implicit agent can also be used to show that there is considerable overlap between ergative and mediopassive construction. In (20) the verb fill is ergative as no external agent is necessary, but in (21), it is used in mediopassive constructions in which such an agent is implied.

(20)   *… her eyes filled with tears.*
(21)   *Each dispenser holds 12 soda cans and fills from the top.*

It seems that the grammatical-semantic properties of mediopassive constructions in English are quite complex as they are not in the rules formal ones; they are grammatically constructed in active voice clauses, but their meanings tend to be understood as passive-like ones. In linguistic viewpoint, the term passive-like is preferred because the meaning are not the real passive ones; the senses active are still semantically inside. It is naturally influenced much by the conventional-cultural style and practical-made constructions of language uses. It can be seen and assumed that those constructions are less formal and commonly used for certain registers. But it does not mean that they are used limitedly. They are, in fact, semantically and pragmatically productive constructions in English. Therefore, the understanding on mediopassive constructions in English is academically and communicatively necessary for EFL learners in multilingual societies, such as in Indonesia.

2. Foreign Language Learning and Language Interference in Multilingual Society

Learning a foreign language in a multilingual society faces linguistic and non-linguistic problems. In general, a multilingual society refers to a society with more than one local language originally used as L1. Societies and speech communities in many places and language conditions in Indonesia are the best examples of EFL learning in multilingual societies. The terms first language (L1), second language (L2), and foreign language (FL) are frequently appeared and used in Sociolinguistics and language teaching, in fact. Simply, Stern (1994:9 – 18), for instance, explains that L1 is the language naturally and firstly acquired and used since childhood. It is the language someone has in the first environment and develops in such a way as the natural processes. Second language is the language possessed and used after the L1 through learning in bigger environment. Then, FL is the language possessed by someone through academic learning and particular purposes after L1 and/or L2.

Stern (1994:19 – 21) adds that language learning includes all kinds of language learning for which no formal provision is made through teaching; language learning takes place all time. This is the definition about language learning as the natural processes. In academic point of view, language learning should be related to the concept of language teaching. Language teaching, in other side, can be defined as the activities which are intended to bring about language learning. In this sense, it can be said that language teaching widely so as to include all activities to bring about language learning. Foreign language teaching and learning, of course, need some planned and programmed activities in order to assign and provide learners with the FL features. In this case, the grammatical-semantic features of English should be informed and brought into the classroom programs formally, including those of mediopassive constructions.

The teaching and learning of EFL in multilingual societies are more complicated than those of L2 and L1. EFL is learned by people who already use at least one other language and who live in a community in which English is not normally used. This community is inevitably influenced by norms that are not those of English-speaking countries and those norms influence the teachers' and learners' expectations of the language learning processes (see Tomlinson in Hinkel (ed.), 2005:137). The condition may cause linguistic and socio-cultural problems in many EFL learning programs. Among the others, the phenomena of language interference, inter-language communication, and pragmatic transfer are commonly found.

Language interference, the rearrangement of patters that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domains of language learnt. It is a common-sense notion that L2 and FL learners use elements or structures of their native language in speaking and writing in the language they are learning. The language interference phenomena can come to all levels of language because of linguistic and non-linguistics factors. That is why it is easy to find EFL learners in Indonesia, for example, use Indonesian and/or their local language features when they speak or write (see further Appel and Muysken, 1988; Stern, 1994; Tomlinson in Hinkel (ed.), 2005). Academically, however, the negative transfers of L1 into the learnt language should be minimized in order that the learners are capable to use the language communicatively.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
1. The Grammatical-Semantic Properties of English Mediopassive Constructions

Mediopassive constructions are the 'deviation' constructions of traditional voice system, active and passive voice construction. According to Legenhausen as quoted by Hundt (2007:3), the mediopassive construction is described as "a marginal structural type, which flourishes mainly in special registers, is liable to show varying degrees of conventionalization, pattern irregularities and individual idiosyncrasies. The mediopassive construction belongs to 'specific' grammatical construction that has stylistic uses and meanings. This is very important to know that it needs socio-cultural behavior in English uses in several English speaking-countries; different countries may have different form of mediopassives. Due to these grammatical-functional properties, it is not surprised that most learners of EFL in multilingual societies, let's say in Indonesia, do not really pay serious attention to the stylistic constructions. Academically, the EFL learners at universities or those who are at the post-intermediate and advanced levels should understand the grammatical-semantic properties and be able to use them both in spoken and written English well.

Let's review the main grammatical-semantic properties of English medio-passive constructions which are essential for the EFL learners, moreover in the multilingual societies at advanced level. Firstly, English mediopassive constructions concern with morphosyntactic aspects and traditional voice system. Typically, the object of the transitive pattern occurs in subject position in a mediopassive construction. They are grammatically active but semantically understood as passive-like. They are not straightforward passives semantically because the subject-NP in mediopassives typically shares in the responsibility for the action expressed by the verb; often, a property inherent in the subject-NP facilitates the action. In this case, mediopassives are not simply a question of morphology and syntax, but also an aspect at the interface between syntax and semantics (Hundt, 2007). Therefore, non-native speakers of English as well as EFL learners have to be in socio-cultural awareness of English uses.

Secondly, in clear-cut cases of mediopassive constructions, the verb is modified either by an adverb (like in (22)) or by a modal verb (like in (23)). Negation (as in (24)) is a third way of focusing on inherent properties or 'design features' of the subject-NP (see Hundt, 2007:7 – 8).

(22) *Morton's newest product turns out* to sell as well as its stock did.

(23) *Scraps of fleece may combine* to make a multi-colored fleece hat, …

(24) … *Barbara Boxer doesn't shock* easily.

Thirdly, the English mediopassive constructions are similar to ergative ones, but of course they should not be grammatical-semantically treated as the same onstructions. Ergatives can be used intransitively without modification and in non-generic contex; they usually do not imply an external agent (see again (15) – (17)).

As it has been reviewed in Part B as well, the fourth grammatical-semantic properties of English mediopassive constructions can be collectively summarized as: (i) need for (adverbial) modification (see again (22), (24)); (ii) need for temporal-aspectual restrictions (18); and (iii) need the implication of an external agent (21). The collective grammatical-semantic properties at indicated as the fourth one can be claimed as more on semantic rather than grammatical ones. As the main grammatical-semantic properties presented in this part, the most important think to know is that the mediopassives are morpho-syntactically active, but they should be semantically understood as passive ones. The other grammatical-semantic criteria are needed to have better linguistic and functional understanding on the English mediopassives.

In the real language uses, it is of course that the native speakers of English are able to create and use the constructions, and then such constructions are socio-culturally accepted as a language style. In the field, it is common to find that British English may have different forms and particular verbs used as mediopassives compared with those commonly used in American or in New Zealand English. It is necessary then to know as well that the mediopassives should be 'acquired' as they are appeared in language uses.

2. English Mediopassive Constructions: How Necessary are They for EFL Learners?

As it is claimed by Jufrizal (2013), the phenomena of mediopassive constructions bring about serious linguistic and academic problems for most EFL learners in West-Sumatera. Such claim

can be generalized as the linguistic-academic problems faced by EFL learners in multilingual societies, as in Indonesia. The following are more examples of English clause constructions written by EFL learners as they are found in their theses (Mukahiyar and Jufrizal, 2012).

(25) *Secondly, it is implied that …*
(26) *Each cycle was consisted of plan, action, observation, and reflection.*
(27) *This research was focused on the implementation …*
(28) *The questions were related to the topics …*
(29) *The research was aimed at improving …*

The native speakers of English tend to use the active constructions for (25) – (29); therefore the followings are grammatical-semantically more acceptable in English.

(30) *Secondly, it implies that …*
(31) *Each cycle consisted of plan, action, observation, and reflection.*
(32) *This research focused on the implementation …*
(33) *The questions related to the topics …*
(34) *The research aimed at improving …*

It can be linguistically seen that these constructions appeared in students' writing and speaking caused by the "direct" transfers of Indonesian (or Malay) 'sense' of passive meanings into English. It can be categorized as grammatical transfer of the first language or a kind of language interference, particularly on grammatical interference. If it is still allowed at advanced level of EFL learning and no suitable corrections given, it becomes negative grammatical transfer. In addition, it is a type of "negative" fossilization possessed by Indonesian learners of EFL, the learners of English in multilingual societies (see further Jufrizal, 2013).

The question now is that *how necessary are the grammatical-semantic properties of English mediopassive constructions for EFL learners in multilingual societies, let's have example in Indonesia?* The general answer for this question is that it is highly necessary. Why is it so? There are, at least, four reasons to say that the understanding on the grammatical-semantic properties of English mediopassive constructions for EFL learners in multilingual societies, as in Indonesia. Firstly, English is learned in most multilingual societies, such as in Indonesia, as a foreign language. Thus, the grammar of English should be brought into the classrooms as the pedagogical grammar, the grammar which is prepared for foreign learners. In pedagogical grammar, the examples are pedagogically derived and simplified based on linguistic researches in such a way that the grammatical-semantic features of English grammar are intentionally introduced and exercised based on the level of learning programs. It should be understood as well that the pedagogical grammar is the combination between descriptive and prescriptive grammar; the form of grammar which is academically designed to be learnt gradually (see Tomlin in Odlin (ed.), 1994; Chalker in Bygate et.al (eds.), 1994).

Secondly, the mediopassive constructions have complicated-complex theoretical bases; it relates to the grammatical combinations of active-passive voice, ergative constructions, and the interface between syntax and semantics, as well. The grammatical-semantic complexity cannot be acquired or understood by EFL learners in multilingual societies without pedagogical-academic instructions. The teaching and learning processes of English should include such stylistic constructions, unless the students do not have sufficient knowledge concerning with the English mediopassives. If it so, most students may have "fossilized" problems in speaking and writing, then. Thirdly, due to the case that such construction is more on language style rather than grammatical regulations, it is hard for EFL learners to have knowledge and ability to use them individually. Consequently, most learners may understand the constructions by means of translating based on their own L1 intuition. Thus, the ungrammatical constructions frequently appear in learners' speaking and writing.

The last reason is that to lead learners avoiding fossilized errors in constructing particular clauses and sentences both in speaking and writing. The learners of EFL in multilingual societies need to know and understand that in addition to formal-grammatical constructions, English has stylistic constructions which deviate from the regular ones. Theoretically, that a language has specific-stylistic constructions which are not in regular-grammatical ones is common. All languages

have such stylistic constructions in various grammatical-semantic properties. In relation to the point, it is needed to include the learning of English mediopassives in the EFL learning programs in Indonesia, and in multilingual societies in general. Language styles and socio-cultural background of language uses and its meanings are important to introduce in the advanced level of English learning.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Linguistically, the linguistic phenomena of English mediopassive constructions are interesting and challenging to be studied; grammatical-semantic properties are in complex interfaces in the constructions. In other side, that English has mediopassive constructions with specific grammatical-semantic properties should be realized by the teacher and learners of EFL in multilingual societies, particularly at post-intermediate and advanced levels. Lack of understanding and ability to use the stylistic constructions may cause "fossilized" errors of constructing grammatical clause constructions. It is highly argued on this occasion that the English mediopassive constructions should be a part of the EFL teaching programs in Indonesia and in multilingual societies.

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