

INTERLINGUAL TRANSFER IN USING THE ENGLISH PASSIVE VOICE OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Passive voice is commonly used in English but it is usually absent or rarely present in topic-prominent languages like Vietnamese. Therefore, Vietnamese students often misuse the voice, transfer the sentences containing the words “bị” or “được” in Vietnamese active sentences into English passive sentences or tend to use the active voice in some contexts that passive voice should be used. In the light of finding out solutions to these problems, this article aims at the literature review of the Vietnamese passive voice in view of syntactic constructions and the English passive voice. This paper also provides implications for improving the teaching and learning of English passive voice.

Keywords: topic-prominent languages, syntactic constructions, interlingual transfer.

1. Introduction

Grammar has always played a crucial role in language teaching and learning. Language teachers and specialists are of the view that grammar can help first, second and foreign language learners develop linguistic competence. Grammar affects students' performance in all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Littlewood (1994) mentioned that communication through correct grammar could help learners make a wider and more creative range of meaning choices. Thus, he added that “through the grammatical system of language, then communication can become increasingly independent of its setting.”

The passive sentences, an important part of every English language teaching grammar syllabus, present difficulty to many Vietnamese learners. Although they have learned the passive voice since they were at secondary school, they still have difficulty using them. As Celce-Murcia claims

“the English passive is a problem for non- English speakers, mainly with regard to usage. Even though ESL/EFL students can easily learn to form the passive, they have problems learning when to use it.” And she explains some reasons for this “For most English learners, however, the passive will occur more frequently in English than in the learners' native language and there will be a wider variety of passive sentence types in English than in their own language”. Likewise, Parrott (2000) claims that for most learners, knowing when to use passive constructions is the greatest problem. And they often don't use them where they would be appropriate.

Although there are several studies on the errors in the English passive voice, the findings are about errors in constructions and in the translation from the Vietnamese into English or vice versa. In fact, during the teaching process and observation, the researcher realized that the students misused the voice or avoided using the passive voice in

situations that it should be used. Besides, they have the habit of transferring the Vietnamese sentences carrying the words “bị” or “được” into the passive sentences in English. Therefore, in order to have a thorough and particular insight into the problems that students face and how far towards the goal is the knowledge acquired, this paper aims to revise some necessary literature in passive voice in Vietnamese and in English and to illustrate some interlingual errors made by students in using passive voice and make some suggestions for improving the teaching and learning of The English passive voice.

2. Literature review

2.1. The passive voice in Vietnamese

The issues of passive voice or passive sentences in Vietnamese have been the most controversial among the Vietnamese linguists. Their different approaches to Vietnamese passive sentences could be put into two groups: the morphological approach and the syntactic approach, the former denies and the later acknowledges the existence of passive sentences in Vietnamese.

Some researchers such as Tran Trong Kim (1936), Emeneau (1951), Cadiere (1958), etc. claim that Vietnamese is an isolating language, its verbs do not have passive voice, therefore it does not have passive sentences as do inflecting languages (such as Russian, French, etc.). To transform an active sentence to the passive sentence, the verb in inflecting languages has to change its form from active voice to passive voice. The verbs in Vietnamese do not change their forms so they do not satisfy these strict morphological criteria of passive voice as a grammatical category. Thompson (1965) also considers that the construction with được/bị are just the translation equivalents of passive constructions in Indo-European languages. Besides the absence of passive voice as a morphological category, other researchers base on the fact that Vietnamese is a topic-prominent rather than subject-prominent language to deny the existence of passive sentences in Vietnamese. According to Li, Ch. N and Thompson, S.A (1976), Nguyen Thi Anh (2000), Cao Xuan Hao (2001), passive constructions are very common in subject-prominent languages but usually absent or rarely present in topic-prominent languages.

Contrary to the first view, some other researchers like Nguyễn Phú Phong (1976), Hoàng Trọng Phiến (1980), Lê Xuân Thái (1989), Diệp Quang Ban and Nguyễn Thị Thuận (2000) claim that Vietnamese has passive sentences as syntactic constructions. These authors argue that the passive voice in Vietnamese is not marked in the form of verbs but in the form of a syntactic construction with established grammatical and semantic characteristics. According to these authors, the syntactic structures of a Vietnamese passive sentence are as follows:

- The subject of the passive is the object of the alternative active. It denotes the action of patient, not the action of agent.

- The predicate of the passive includes an auxiliary bị/được/do and a transitive verb (sometimes bị/được can be absent from passive sentences).

- The agentive subject is optional to be present in the passive.

As presented above, there are different views on passive sentences in Vietnamese. From these arguments, however, we can come to conclusion that passive voice does exist in Vietnamese with specific grammatical and semantic characteristics.

- *Meaning and Use of the Vietnamese passive voice:* In ‘Ngữ văn 7’ published by Ministry of Education and Training (2004), the passive voice is introduced to the Vietnamese students with some following meanings:

- + In the passive sentences, subjects are people or things that receive the action or are affected by the action.

- + In some contexts, the active- passive transform or vice versa aims to make the text coherent. In the two following examples, passive voice is used because the theme in the first text (Tinh thần yêu nước) and the second text (Thế Lữ) remain the subjects in the preceeding sentences to make the text easy to be understood and smooth.

Ex: - Tinh thần yêu nước cũng như các thứ của quý. Có khi được trưng bày trong tủ kính, trong bình pha lê, rõ ràng dễ thấy. nhưng cũng có khi cất giấu kín đáo trong rương, trong hòm. (Hồ Chí Minh)

- Người đầu tiên chịu ảnh hưởng thơ Pháp rất đậm là Thế Lữ. Những bài thơ có tiếng của Thế Lữ ra đời từ đầu năm 1933 đến 1934. Giữa lúc người thanh niên Việt Nam bấy giờ ngập trong quá khứ đến

tận cổ thì Thế Lữ đưa về cho họ cái hương vị phương xa. Tác giả “Mấy vần thơ” liền được tôn làm đương thời đệ nhất thi sĩ. (Hoài Thanh)

These two meanings of the passive voice are the same as ones in the English passive. However, the English passive voice has more usages than the Vietnamese passive.

• *Structures of the Vietnamese passive sentences:* According to Nguyễn Hồng Côn, Bùi Thị Diên (2004), Lê Xuân Thái (1989), there are three types of passive sentences in Vietnamese:

1. NP2 - được/ bị - V(unchanged form)
Nó bị phạt (He is punished)
Cô ấy được khen (she is praised)
2. NP2 - được/ bị - NP1 – V
Nó bị bố nó đánh (He was hit by his father)
Hoa được cô giáo khen (Hoa is complimented by the teacher)
3. NP2 - được/ bị - V - bởi - NP1
Truyện Kiều được sáng tác bởi đại thi hào Nguyễn Du.

(Kiều story was written by Nguyen Du)

The passive voice in Vietnamese is often expressed and recognized by the two words “được” and “bị”. However, there are some cases that these words do not perform passive meanings. This can be seen in the two following examples: “Nó được gặp thủ tướng” (He has met the Prime Minister) or “Nó bị té” (She fell). These sentences demonstrate active voice, not the passive one.

Passive voice with the word “được” is used when people want to mention positive meanings: “Hoa được mẹ đưa đi xem xiếc” (Hoa was taken to the circus by her mother). On the other hand, passive voice with the word “bị” is used when people want to express negative aspects: “Nó bị đánh” (He was hit). Nevertheless, not all passive meanings are marked with the two words above. There are some kinds of special passive voice with the absence of the two words. For example, “Mặt tô đậm quá” (Your face was thickly made up); “Anh sinh ở đâu?” (Where were you born?) and “Cầu đã xây xong” (The bridge has been built).

2.2. The features of the English passive voice

• *English passive constructions:* Many linguists like Azar (2003), Bland (2003), Carter and McCarthy (2006), Celce-Murcia (1983), Parrott (2000), Sandra (2005) and etc divide passive into two types: standard passives with Be and Get and

pseudo-passives with Get and Have.

Generally, we have four distinct passive structures as follows:

1. Simple passives with BE... PAST PARTICIPLE

Mary was hit by John.

Grapes are grown in that valley.

2. Simple passives with GET..... PAST PARTICIPLE

Barry got invited to the party.

John got hurt in the accident.

3. Complex passives with BE..... PAST PARTICIPLE

It is rumored that he will get the job.

That he will get the job has been decided.

John is thought to be intelligent, etc.

4. Pseudo passives with GET / HAVE ...NP..... PAST PARTICIPLE

Hal has his car stolen last week.

Alice had her purse snatched while shopping downtown

While Get-passive and Pseudo passives have the same characteristic as Be passive as the grammatical subject is typically the recipient of the action, they differ from Be- passive in the functions they perform and the contexts in which they are used. The meaning and use of each type of passive form are presented in details as follows

• *Meaning and use of the passive voice with Be:*

The use of passive versus active voice is context-sensitive grammar choice. For this reason, the meaning of a passive sentence should be explained and understood not only at the sentence-level but also at discourse - level. It is in situations that the meaning of the passive voice is revealed. In other words, the use of passive voice conveys the function and the meaning of the passive voice in the context.

Azar (1989), Bland (2003), Parrott (2000), Carter et al (2006), Sandra (2005), Jacobs (1993) provide some reasons for using the passive voice:

+ Use the passive when the receiver or result of an action is more important than the agent. The passive is often used in descriptions of results or processes involving things rather than people.

+ Agentless passives are used when the agent is unimportant, unknown, or obvious.

+ The agentless passive is used to avoid very general subjects such as people, someone, we, one,

and impersonal you and they. The passive often sounds more indirect or impersonal.

+ Sometimes the agentless passive is used to avoid taking responsibility for an action or to avoid blaming another person. e.g., A boss speaking to his employees: A serious error was made in the payroll. (The boss deliberately doesn't say who made the error.)

+ Passive are often used without agents if the agent is unimportant, unknown, or obvious. However, the agent is necessary when it is surprising or unexpected e.g., The mail has been delivered by an experimental robot (The agent is surprising.). We were given six pages of homework by a substitute teacher. (The agent is unexpected.)

+ An agent is used to provide additional or new information. e.g., You will be notified about the exam date by e-mail.

+ An agent is used to complete the meaning of the sentence or to add important information- especially a proper noun, such as the name of an author, artist, composer, inventor, or designer e.g., Washington, D.C. was designed by Pierre L'Enfant.

+ Academic discourse, such as textbooks and other factual materials, tends to focus on objects, processes, and results. Such materials try to present an objective and impersonal perspective to convey a sense of authority. To express this tone, writers often use passive expressions with it-subjects (e.g., It is expected that) as well as other passive constructions e.g., It is generally agreed that people can learn something much more rapidly the second time.

+ In public discourse, such as newspaper headlines, public announcements, and signs, the passive is used to convey an objective or impersonal tone. The passive often sounds more formal, factual, or authoritative. E.g., Over 100 People Injured by Aftershocks. (Newspaper Headlines) or Passengers are requested to remain seated. (Announcement on an Airplane)

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983:228) also provide us some guidelines concerning when to use the passive:

+ When the agent is redundant, i.e., easy to supply, and therefore not expressed. e.g.: Oranges are grown in California.

+ When the writer wants to emphasize the

receiver or result of the action. e.g.: Six people were killed by the tornado.

+ When the writer wants to make a statement sound objective without revealing the source of information e.g.: It is assumed/believed that he will announce his candidacy soon.

+ When the writer wants to be tactful or evasive by not mentioning the agent or when he or she cannot or will not identify the agent e.g.: Based on the total figure, it appears that an error was made in the budget.

+ When the writer wishes to retain the same grammatical subject in successive clauses, even though the function of the noun phrase changes from agent to theme. e.g.: George Foreman beat Joe Frazier, but he was beaten by Muhammad Ali.

+ When the passive is more appropriate than the active (usually in complex sentences). e.g.: The results of this second language learning experiment tend to confirm the hypothesis that students learn in distinctively different ways as was suggested by Bogen, Paivio, Cohen and Witkin. (In this context the passive is more appropriate than the active, since the hypothesis, which is the theme and also the NP of primary importance, can be fully stated before the writer mentions the source authors (i.e., agents), who are of secondary importance here.

+ When the theme is given information and the agent is new information. e.g.: What a lovely scarf!

Thank you. It was given to me by Pam.

As far as we see in the guidelines in using the passive voice, agentless passive is mentioned. Indeed, passive sentences are usually used without the agent at all. The passive sentences that do not mention the agent are called agentless passives. The use of the agentive passive and the agentless passive is clarified in the notion of agentless passive.

● *Agentless passive*: The majority of passive sentences that occur in speech and in writing (i.e., around 85 percent) do not have an explicit agent. For example:

Rice is grown in many Asian countries.

The papers have been destroyed.

Such sentences occur when the agent is understood, e.g., "farmer" in the first sentence above, or perhaps unknown, as in the second one.

In a usage study of the English passive Shintani (1979; cited in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-

Freeman, 1983:217) suggests that we teach our ESL/EFL students when and why to retain the agent in those approximately 15 percent of passive sentences that have explicit agents-rather than trying to give them rules for omitting the agent in those 85 percent of passives that are agentless. She examined a large number of agents that were overtly expressed in passive sentences occurring in written and spoken discourse, and she concluded that almost all these agents could be explained by one of the following generalizations:

1. The agent is a proper name designating an artist, inventor, discoverer, innovator, etc., who is too important to omit in the context.

The Mona Lisa was painted by da Vinci.

2. The agent is an indefinite noun phrase, i.e., new information, and is retained to provide the listener or reader with the new information.

While Jill was walking down the street, her purse was snatched by a young man.

3. The agent is an inanimate noun phrase which is retained because it is unexpected; i.e., we expect agents to be animate, and almost all omitted agents get reconstructed as animate nouns.

All the lights and appliances in the Albertson household are switched on and off daily by an electrical device.

Among the agentless passive sentences are stative passive, which is ambiguous and might cause confusion to the EFL learners.

● *Stative passive*: As Azar (1981) defines, when the passive form is used to describe an existing situation or state, it is called the stative passive. For example:

The door is blocked.

The window is broken.

Ann is married to Alex.

I am lost.

In the stative passive: no action is taking place; the action happened earlier; There is no by-phrase; The past participle functions as an adjective; Prepositions other than by can follow stative passive verbs; These sentences have no equivalent active sentences.

Also, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) state that a significant number of passive sentences in English are stative passive; i.e., they function more like predicate adjectives than like passive verbs. This distinction will become clearer

if we consider the following pair of sentences:

The wells are located near the edge of the reserve.

The wells were located by two engineers.

Even though the verb locate appears in both sentences, two different meanings are being expressed. The first sentence is a stative passive without an agent and without an active voice counterpart; it gives the reader or listener the location of the wells. Note also that the present tense is used. This is typical though not universal for stative passives. The second sentence, however, does have an agent (i.e., the engineers), and it tells us that the engineers discovered the locations of the wells; also, an active voice counterpart is possible.

Some linguists maintain that stative passives are really adjectives, not true passives. Whatever analysis is used, we should be aware of the fact that some sentences that look like normal passives are in fact stative passives that have no agent and no active voice counterpart (Jacobs; 1993).

● *Meaning and use of passives with GET*: Bland (2003) states that GET commonly replaces BE in informal conversation. GET passives are often more dynamic and emotional than BE passives. Sentences with GET passives are usually about people rather than objects and especially about situations that people cannot control.

And as Celce-Murcia (1983) points out the BE passive is formal or neutral whereas the GET passive is colloquial and perhaps also suggests the emotional involvement of the speaker. The GET passive is more limited than the BE passive in that it can only be used with verbs denoting actions and processes, not states. This, of course, characterizes the fundamental difference between the two, i.e. GET emphasizes process while BE reports a state.

Similarly, Carter et al (2000) suggest that GET passives are very common in spoken English, and are likely to be used without an agent and are most often used when the speaker considers a situation adverse or problematic.

Parrott (2000) provides some reasons for using the Get passive:

+ The action is unexpected, involuntary or possibly unwelcome. (ex: when he picked up the phone we got cut off.)

+ An achievement based on something that has

been built up beforehand. (ex: She got elected.)

+ An achievement in the face of difficulty. (ex: I finally got admitted to hospital.)

It is a matter of fact that the Get-passive is fairly frequent in colloquial English, not only in simple passives but also in pseudo-passive like Have,

For this reason, it should be introduced to the learners carefully.

• *Meaning and use of pseudo-passives with HAVE or GET*: Pseudo -passives are formed with have / get + an object + past participle of the verb.

Pseudo - passives are common in informal English. They also have subjects which have things done for them, to them or which happen to them. Pseudo passives with have are normally used when somebody does something for you or when you arrange a service, usually by an expert or professional (Carter, 2000:101).

According to Carter and McCarthy (2006), the have pseudo-passive most typically enables a person affected by an action or event to be made the grammatical subject, thereby making that person the starting point for the message:

They had their keys stolen.

He had his window smashed.

The meaning may be causative or non-causative:

I don't mind paying to go to the dentist or to have my eyes checked

(causative: I make it happen)

My friend round the corner recently had his video stolen.

(non-causative: it was not his intention or aim)

To sum up, with all these complications, there is no surprise that the passive voice presents difficulty for non-native speakers. According to Error

Analysis (EA), one of the sources of errors is the interference of mother tongue. Therefore, a look into the difference between the English passive and Vietnamese passive should be taken into consideration.

2.3. The contrast between the English passive voice and the Vietnamese passive voice

As we can see from the descriptions above, the meaning and use of the passive voice in the two languages are quite similar. The big differences lie in the forms of the two languages, as:

Moreover, Vietnamese people do not often use the passive voice, but usually change it into the active voice. For instance, "Mary's mother took her to the zoo" instead of "Mary was taken to the zoo by her mother" while the focus is Mary. Furthermore, Vietnamese people do not use double passive or passive causatives as English people do.

2.4. Interlingual transfer

The term Transfer is defined by Brown (2000) as 'a general term describing the carryover of previous performance or knowledge to subsequent learning'. Positive transfer occurs when the prior knowledge benefits the learning task. Negative transfer occurs when previous performance disrupts the performance of a second task. Negative transfer can be referred to as interference. Littlewood points out 'In the case of transfer, the learner uses his previous mother-tongue experience as a means to organize the second language data.'

The ter Interlanguage was coined by the American linguist, Larry Selinker, in recognition of the fact that L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws, in part, on the learner's L1 but is also different from it and also from the target

Table 1. The big differences lie in the forms of the two languages

English	Vietnamese
- Be + past participle - Or Get + past participle - Have/ Get+ NP + past participle - The forms of "tobe" "get" and "have" and the verbs change based on the subjects and tenses - We can distinguish the active sentences from the passive sentences through the structures of the sentences	- Được/ bị + Verb - Được/ bị + NP + Verb - Được / bị + Verb+ do/ bởi + NP - The forms of verbs remain unchanged. - The distinction is confusing because "được" "bị" sometimes do not mark the passiveness. Otherwise, some sentences do not carry "bị" "được" "do" (bởi) but they are passive sentences as in "Cầu đã xây xong" or "bức tranh tô đậm quá"

language. A learner's interlanguage is, therefore, a unique linguistic system.

Both CAH (Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis) and EA (Error Analysis) claim that Interlingual Transfer is the first factor that affects second language acquisition and also a significant source of errors. As Lado (1957) states (cf. Dulay and Burt, 1972:97):

"That individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture, both productively when attempting to speak the language...and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language..."

On the other hand, Richards and Sampton (1971) claim that "Sentences in the target language may exhibit interference from the mother tongue"

Also, Brown suggests that "The beginning stages of learning a second language are especially vulnerable to interlingual transfer from the native language, or interference." According to Brown, in these early stages, before the system of the second language is familiar, the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner can draw.

Besides, Dulay and Burt (1972), George (1971) found that one-third of the deviant sentences from second language learners could be attributed to language transfer (Richards and Sampson, 1971).

3. Interlingual transfer in using the English passive voice of Vietnamese students

According to many researchers, errors in language transfer are sometimes inevitable. In a survey on Vietnamese learners' habit of translating sentences with "bị/được" into English, Hoàng Thị Phương Thảo, Trần Thuần (2000) claimed that "bị/được" is overemphasized in English - Vietnamese translation, the consequence of which is the tendency to treat any sentences containing bị/được as passive. The most typical examples are:

Tôi bị mất tiền = I was lost money

Xe bị hư = The car was broken down

Similarly, Swan and Smith (1987) point out that it is characteristic of Vietnamese learners of English that they avoid using passive forms, and it is sometimes hard to convince them that English passives entail no special difficulties. They also tend to equate Vietnamese 'do' with the English

word 'by', which they are, in consequence, liable to misuse.

From the observations during 27 years of teaching Vietnamese students English, the most common errors in language transfer are collected and listed in the following table:

4. Implications

Solving the problems in using English passive voice requires great attention and effort of teachers as well as learners. The following implications should be taken into consideration.

- Teachers should introduce the passive voice in the contexts and equip students with some guidelines in using the passive voice. As Celce-Murcia stated, "English passive voice is context-sensitive grammar choice". The meanings of passive voice are revealed in the situations or contexts in which passive voice is used. Therefore, meanings of passive voice should be explained at discourse level. Once the students understand thoroughly the meanings of passive voice, they can use it properly and efficiently.

- It is recommended that teachers provide different kinds of passive voice such as Get-passive; Causative passive with Have or Get; Complex passive as well as the functions of each type in context for the reason that get passive and have passive are very common in spoken English and they do not exist in Vietnamese. Besides, for the students at university level, complex passive as "It is known /said/ believed that ..." should be introduced tactfully and carefully because it is used frequently in academic writing.

- It is also important for teachers to help students to distinguish intransitives from transitive verbs as well as some middle verbs. This requires the teachers' tact and sensitive explanation because middle verbs such as begin, break, close, open, end, freeze, start, stop, change, burst, increase, decrease may cause confusion to the students. Therefore, the teachers should provide the verbs in contrast. For example:

The store opens at 9 a.m (open: intransitive)

The store was opened in 1975 (open: transitive)

Prices increase (increase: intransitive)

The salary will be increased next month (increase: transitive)

Besides, the students might not know what verbs are intransitives so they misuse the voice. For this

Table 2. The most common errors in language transfer

Vietnamese Version	English Version
1. Tôi bị đau đầu	I am headached
2. Tôi bị đau răng	I am toothached
3. Tôi bị đau bụng	I am stomachached
4. Tôi bị đau chân	I am hurt in my leg
5. Tôi bị đau lưng	I am backached
6. Ông ta bị gãy chân/tay	He was broken a leg/an arm
7. Họ bị thua trong trận đấu bóng đá	They were lost in the football match
8. Ngày hôm qua, tôi bị mất điện thoại	I was lost a cell phone yesterday
9. Anh ấy bị tai nạn	He was accidented
10. Ba tôi bị mất trong tai nạn	My father was died in the accident
11. Cô ấy bị té(ngã) cầu thang	She was fallen from the stairs
12. Căn nhà bị sập	The house was collapsed
13. Cậu ấy bị mất trí nhớ	He was lost memory
14. Bà ấy bị ngất xỉu	She was fainted
15. Chúng tôi bị thiếu hụt tiền bạc	We are lacked of money
16. Tôi đã được đi du lịch nhiều nơi	I was travelled to many places
17. Tôi được ngồi ở gần cửa sổ	I was sat near the window
18. Tôi được sống gần bố mẹ	I am lived near my parents
19. Chúng tôi được ăn ngon	We were eaten delicious food
20. Tôi được gặp gỡ mọi người	I was met many people
21. Tôi được tăng lương tháng này	I was increased my salary this month
22. Tôi được hít thở không khí trong lành	I am breathed the clean air
23. Bà ấy được thừa kế căn nhà này	She is inherited this house
24. Tôi được làm việc chung với anh ấy	I am worked with him
25. Tôi được cắt tóc hôm qua	I was cut my hair yesterday
26. Chúng tôi được ở khách sạn 4 sao	We were stayed in the 4 stars hotel

reason, the teachers should explain to the students what intransitives are and give as many situations as possible so that the students can master them. Here are some suggestions:

should also be introduced in order for the students to better their understanding about the Vietnamese passive as well as the differences between the passive sentences in two languages. Especially, it is

- Intransitive verbs are verbs that do not have objects i.e. no one/ thing receives the action.

They are verbs expressing a state such as sleep, snow, rain, die, live, cry, ache, stay, look, stand, talk, remain, faint so on ex; My father died 20 years ago.

They are verbs expressing the movement or coming into being such as travel, go, come, walk, arrive, fall, depart, emerge, erupt, occur, appear etc.

Ex: The accident happened when we were walking across the street

It rained heavily yesterday

On the other hand, some verbs are transitive verbs but they do not have passive form as they make no sense in English such as become, has, weigh, resemble, consist of, suit, cost, lack, fit, possess as in the following example:

He weighs 150 pounds (we cannot say 150 pounds are weighed by him)

Jenny resembles Bob (we cannot say Bob is resembled by Jenny)

We lack funds.

Two cups equal a pint.

She became a doctor.

The book costs ten dollar.

- A contrastive analysis between Vietnamese passive and English passive

necessary that the teachers clarify the meaning of the Vietnamese passive voice and help them to recognize that not all passive sentences carry the meaning bị or được as in “Nó bị ngã” or “Nó được điểm mười” or some passive sentences do not carry the passive markers(i.e. bị / được). For example: “Mắt tôi đậm quá” or “Anh sinh ở đâu?”; “ Cầu đã xây xong”.

- Teachers themselves should refer some grammar books to keep abreast of new knowledge as well as some useful strategies to improve the teaching of passive voice in particular and grammar in general.

5. Conclusion

Language interference is among contributory

factors of the problems in using the English passive voice. It is proved that the habit of translating sentences with “bị/ được” into English leads to the tendency to treat any sentences containing these words as passive (e.g. I am headached or They were accidented last week). Language interference, however, cannot be fully expressed through these examples. It affects the learners in many aspects such as the habits of using the active voice instead of the passive voice, the absence of some types of the passive in Vietnamese etc...

Therefore, there should be a consideration and proper remedies to the interlingual errors in the using English passive voice of Vietnamese students ■

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SỰ CHUYỂN GIAO NGÔN NGỮ TRONG VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÂU BỊ ĐỘNG TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN VIỆT NAM

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TÓM TẮT:

Câu bị động được sử dụng phổ biến trong tiếng Anh nhưng nó thường không có hoặc hiếm khi xuất hiện trong các ngôn ngữ nổi bật về chủ đề như tiếng Việt. Vì vậy, học sinh Việt Nam thường sử dụng sai loại câu, chuyển những câu có chứa từ “bị” hoặc “được” trong câu chủ động trong tiếng Việt thành câu bị động trong tiếng Anh, hoặc có xu hướng sử dụng câu chủ động trong một số ngữ cảnh mà nên sử dụng câu bị động. Nhằm tìm ra giải pháp cho những vấn đề này, bài viết này trình bày tổng quan tài liệu về câu bị động trong tiếng Việt theo cấu trúc cú pháp và câu bị động trong tiếng Anh. Bài viết cũng cung cấp những gợi ý để cải thiện việc dạy và học câu bị động trong tiếng Anh.

Từ khóa: ngôn ngữ nổi bật theo chủ đề, cấu trúc cú pháp, sự chuyển giao giữa các ngôn ngữ.