

Examining the Effect of Textual Enhancement on the Students' Grammar Achievement

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A B S T R A C T

This recent research was conducted to examine the effectiveness of textual enhancement on the students' grammar achievement, in this case passive voice. Two kinds of instruction were implemented to two groups. The first instruction was enhanced instruction which consisted of textual enhancement and rule explanation, and the other instruction was explicit only instruction which consisted of rule explanation only. The study used quasi-experimental research design. A test was used in the pre-test and post-test to get the students' score as the main data to be compared. From the result of the test analysis, finding shows that textual enhancement contributed a significant effect on the students' passive voice achievement. Moreover, from the result of the questionnaire as the supporting instrument, the textual enhancement was more effective to be implemented to those which were considered as the low achievers than those considered as the high achievers. The students were more aware, focus, and easier in recognizing the pattern of passive voice.

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Introduction

A debate about grammar among different linguists and researchers has always become a controversial issue in English language teaching for decades. They are arguing whether teachers should teach grammar or not; and also, how teachers should teach grammar in the classroom. As cited by Thornbury (1999), he claimed that the grammar debate has been a central concern for both theorists and practitioners, with a rich history of claims and counter-claims regarding the teaching of grammar. And this matter still exists till now, especially in Indonesia which many students, even the best students, still strive to study grammar correctly (Kurniafita, 2021).

As the debate goes on, Smith (1981) has proposed consciousness-raising as an alternative to solve second or foreign language teaching and learning problems that emerged in many focus on forms methodologies. Moreover, Richards & Schmidt (2013) define consciousness-raising (CR) as any technique that could support learners to give more attention to language form. They believe that awareness of form will indirectly give contribution to language acquisition. Yet, it should be clear that the main purpose of consciousness raising is to develop students' knowledge of grammar, and it is not the same as giving the knowledge of grammar (Ellis, 2002). CR also creates a method to the grammar teaching which is suitable with the present view about how learners acquire the second or foreign language grammar (Chung & Révész, 2021).

In a decade, Smith (1991, 1993) suggested another term instead of CR, namely "Input Enhancement". Input enhancement is defined as the modification process to make the language input becoming more noticeable to learners (Smith, 1991). From its definition, input enhancement may be seen as a method in language learning which

denotes a considered effort to make the target language form noticeable by modifying its appearance (Chung & Révész, 2021). In his research, Smith (1991, 1993) also proposes some techniques to be used to make input enhancement, namely color coding, bold facing, using error flags, etc. As an example, in teaching Simple Present Tense, this aspect in each sentence could be bolded or underlined. Implementing these techniques can unintentionally attract learners' attention to the aspects of Simple Present Tense. This modification is identified as textual enhancement which only modifies the visual of a text (Smith, 1991).

As explained in the previous parts, visual or textual enhancement is employed to boost the saliency of certain aspects. This type of enhancement is simply applied in the written form in which teachers hand out the learners with a reading text which has textually enhanced the target language forms (Chung & Révész, 2021). Once a certain form is textually enhanced, the form will have different typography from the rest of the other forms. The differences may in the form of font style, color, bold facing, italic, underline, etc. (Wong, 2005). When the target language form is made more salient, it is more likely to be noticed and realized by the learners and as a result, become intake (Smith, 1981, 1991, 1993; Van Patten, 1990). On the other hand, intake is the intermediary phase that occurs between exposure to input and the actual acquisition of language (Krashen, 1981). In short, textual enhancement is speculated to indirectly draw learners' attention to enhanced forms, and thus assisting further processing, noticing, of the target language forms.

Although Wong (2003) had affirmed that the influence of textual enhancement to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) was not well-defined, Han et al. (2008) concluded some valuable and testable insights of the efficacy of textual enhancement for learning, namely: 1) textual enhancement is able to encourage learner in noticing of visually enhanced target language forms in meaning-bearing input; 2) it may also lead to acquisition, but depend on the learner's schemata of the target form; and last 3) learners may notice the forms automatically if they are meaningful. From that conclusion, it may be claimed that textual enhancement can give several benefits for learners in learning a second or foreign language.

This present research was conducted mainly to examine the effectiveness of textual enhancement on students' grammar achievement. Therefore, two different instructions in teaching grammar, namely: explicit instruction only (rule explanation only) and enhanced instruction (rule explanation with textual enhancement), were implemented. However, it is almost impossible to bring all the parts of grammar in this research. Then, passive voice was carried out based on reasons that passive voice was one of the aspects of grammar which was included in curriculum and considered as a vital point to be mastered by students to write an undergraduate thesis (Hafiz et al., 2023; Hastuti & Widodo, 2020; Ramendra et al., 2021).

There are some previous research which were conducted mainly to investigate the state of the art of investigation of strategies used in teaching passive voice in Indonesia (Batubara & Mahardhika, 2020; Deva et al., 2023; Fitria & Muliastari, 2022; Hafiz et al., 2023; Hastuti & Widodo, 2020; Irwan et al., 2018; Islamy & Kaniadewi, 2022; Sari et al., 2022). The research discusses some strategies used by the researchers in order to improve the students' mastery of passive voice. However, none of them used textual enhancement. Therefore, this current research may be considered as the pioneer in Indonesia and alternative strategy in teaching passive voice to Indonesian students.

In other countries, there are some research had been conducted in investigating the use of textual enhancement in teaching several aspects of grammar, such as simple

past and simple present tense (Jahan, 2018; Ratnasari, 2017; Torkabad & Fazilatfar, 2014), conditional and future tenses (Jahan & Kormos, 2015), noun phrase (Fahim & Vaezi, 2011; Shartika & Ishlahiyah, 2018), etc. All of the findings of the previous research above claim that textual enhancement could improve students' grammar proficiency. Therefore, those results' findings can be the basis and references for the researchers in conducting this current research. In other words, the researchers were sure that textual enhancement would give a significant effect toward students' passive voice mastery.

Research Method

This research was designed to examine the effect of different instructions on the students' passive voice achievement. In other words, researchers wanted to establish a possible cause and effect between the independent variable, which is the different instructions (explicit only and enhanced) in teaching passive voice, and the dependent variable, which is the students' passive voice achievement. Therefore, the main design implemented in the current research was experimental research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

However, because of the limitation of randomly assigning subjects from the entire population to groups, the researchers utilized existing classes as intact groups, leading to the adoption of a quasi-experimental design. This approach is in line with the concept proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018), highlighting that in educational contexts, researchers often employ intact groups due to the availability of participants or constraints that prevent the formation of artificial groups.

From the accessible population, the second-semester students of the Agriculture Department of Politeknik Negeri Jember in the 2021-2022 academic year were selected as the participants. There were 66 students participating in this research as subjects. Those 66 students were divided into 2 groups, class A and class B. Class A consisted of 34 students, and class B consisted of 32 students. Later, group A is chosen as the experimental group and group B is chosen as the control group. However, there were 4 students excluded from the experimental group and 2 students from the control group.

As previously mentioned, the research used intact groups as the participants. Therefore, the pre-test and post-test design was applied since the researchers did not know the equivalence of mastering passive voice of the participants chosen. The pre-test was used to know the sample equivalence and the post-test was used to know the effect of the treatment. Thus, a quasi-experimental: the pre-test-post-test non-randomized groups design (Cohen et al., 2018) was employed.

In this research, there were two different treatments implemented, namely explicit only treatment and enhanced treatment. Explicit only treatment was implemented to the control (explicit only) group and enhanced treatment was implemented to the other group, which was experimental (enhanced) group. The difference between the two treatments implemented was only on the material, which was the reading text. The experimental group received textually enhanced reading texts, while the control group received regular reading texts. The reading texts were exposition texts about man-made disasters. The schedule for this current research is presented below.

Table 1. Schedule of Research

Meeting	Enhanced Treatment	Explicit Only Treatment
1 st	Administering pre-test and first treatment.	Administering pre-test and first treatment.
2 nd	Second treatment.	Second treatment.
3 rd	Third treatment.	Third treatment.
4 th	Fourth treatment.	Fourth treatment.
5 th	Administering the post-test and delivering questionnaire.	Administering the post-test.

The researchers had only five meetings to finish the research. Therefore, the first treatment was implemented after the pre-test to maximize the available time. Nevertheless, each treatment had fulfilled the four-main-steps procedure which were shown as follows.

Table 2. The Four-Main-Steps Procedure Used for Each Treatment in the Recent Research

No.	Enhanced Treatment	Explicit Only Treatment	Time
1.	The students are asked to read the text (visual enhanced text) silently.	The students are asked to read the text silently.	+/- 10'
2.	The teacher explains the text and the genre of the text. Lexical aspects of the texts are then explained.	The teacher explains the text and the genre of the text. Lexical aspects of the texts are then explained.	+/- 15'
3.	The rule of passive voice is explained.	The rule of passive voice is explained.	+/- 15'
4.	The students are asked to answer the questions related to the text given with passive voice.	The students are asked to answer the questions related to the text given with passive voice.	+/- 15'

Since the data was collected from the students' achievement in mastering passive voice to know the significant effect of the treatment, the researchers needed a test to measure it which was represented by the students' score. Ary et al. (2018), explain that the test is a valuable measuring instrument for educational research. The test was used in the pre-test and post-test to get the students' score as the main data to be compared.

The test was a written test that consisted of 20 (twenty) items to test passive voice. 10 (ten) items were in the form of multiple choice, 5 (five) items were in the form of gap filling and the last 5 (five) items were in the form of a text completion test. The time allocation to do the test was 30 (thirty) minutes. The same test was used in the pre-test and post-test but the arrangement of the test item was reordered as the consideration that the same test used would make the data more valid (Latief, 2012). The rearrangement of the test item was done to minimize students' memorization from the pre-test.

Moreover, the researchers also used a questionnaire to support the finding resulted from the use of passive voice test in exposition texts. There was only one questionnaire for the experimental (enhanced) group. The questionnaire was delivered after the post-test. The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions asking about students' perspectives toward English, Passive Voice, and the use of textual enhancement in learning passive voice.

The main focus of delivering the questionnaire to the students was to get the students' perspectives towards the use of textual enhancement in teaching passive voice. Furthermore, the questionnaire was used to know the opinion between the high and low

achiever in the implementation of textual enhancement in teaching passive voice. The grouping process was conducted based on the students’ score obtained from the pre-test. The high achievers were the ones who got 60 or more, while the low achievers were the ones who got 55 or less.

Result and Discussion

The data collected from the research were analyzed as the findings of the research. In general, the results of this study have both theoretical and practical contributions. The findings add insights in the existing theories about using textual enhancement in teaching grammar (Ayiewbey, 2013; Cintrón-Valentín & García-Amaya, 2021; Lee & Révész, 2020; Schwartz, 1993; Torkabad & Fazilatfar, 2014) which were said that implementing textual enhancement in teaching grammar could increase the students’ achievement in grammar. Besides, this research findings add the available theories in teaching passive voice to senior high school students in Indonesia (Batubara & Mahardhika, 2020; Deva et al., 2023; Irwan et al., 2018). The elaboration of the findings will be discussed below.

Findings from the Tests

The result of the test was varied. Each group produced different result. The following tables will show the result from the tests, both pre-test and post-test.

Table 3. Result of Pre-Test

Score	Experimental Group (Enhanced Treatment)	Control Group (Explicit Only Treatment)
Maximum	70	75
Minimum	50	45
Average	57.42	56.67

From the data gained from the pre-test, the average score of the control group was 56.67, the maximum score was 75 and the minimum score was 45. Whereas, on the experimental group, the average score was 57.42, the maximum score was 70 and the minimum score was 50. After computing using t-test, there was no significant difference of the average pre-test scores between the two groups, the experimental and the control. It indicated that both groups had equal ability before the treatment was given.

Table 4. Result of Post-Test

Score	Experimental Group (Enhanced Treatment)	Control Group (Explicit Only Treatment)
Maximum	90	85
Minimum	55	60
Average	73.64	69.33

On the post-test, the average score of the control group was 69.33, the maximum score was 85 and the minimum score was 60. This average score increased 12.66 from 56.67 which was obtained from the pre-test. On the other group, the experimental group, the average score was 73.64, the maximum score was 90 and the minimum score was 55. This average score increased 16.22 from 57.42 which was obtained from the pre-test. Based on the computation in t-test, the result says that there was a significant difference in the two average scores of the two groups obtained from the post-test.

However, the computation from the result of the tests was not over. As stated by Dimitrov and Rumrill Jr (2003), the gain score, (Gain or Difference Score = Post-test Score – Pre-test Score) could represent the dependent variable in computation. Moreover,

although it has been criticized, Dimitrov and Rumrill Jr (2003) claim that this assertion is true only if the pre-test scores and the post-test scores have equal (or proportional) variances. Fortunately, the data gained pre- and post-tests in this research had equal (or proportional) variances. Therefore, computation in gain score to see the effectiveness of the instructions compared could be applied. From the data resulted from the gain scores, the average of the gain score of the control (explicit only) group was 12.68, the maximum gain score was 25 and the minimum gain score was 0. On the other group, the experimental (enhanced) group, the average score of the gain score was 16.72, the maximum gain score was 35 and the minimum gain score was 0.

From the result of t-test on gain score, the Sig. value for t-test was .049 and it was less than .05 ($.049 < \alpha, .05$). It could be concluded that the students taught by enhanced instruction which was equipped with textual enhancement have a significant better passive voice achievement compared to those taught by explicit instruction only. In other words, textual enhancement contributed a noteworthy effect on students' passive voice achievement.

Findings from Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to the experimental (enhanced) group to know the students' states, perspectives and opinion toward the use of textual enhancement in teaching passive voice. Later, the results of the questionnaire were analyzed to see the relationship to the score obtained by the students.

From the results of the questionnaire, there are some views inferred. Although more than a half number of the students said that they were not mastering passive voice after the treatment given, most of them felt that they found some benefits in giving textual enhancement in teaching passive voice done by the teacher. As the questionnaire provided by the researcher, the researchers proposed a question about awareness of passive voice when there was textual enhancement used in teaching. Almost three fourth of the students agreed and only one fourth of the students gave negative response. Related to the realizing and focusing on the passive voice aspect, twenty-two students or 69% gave a positive response while ten students disagreed with the statement.

The last aspect being asked to the students was the overall impact of giving textual enhancement on the passive voice mastery. 84% of the subject, twenty-one students, claimed that textual enhancement gave a positive impact in mastering the passive voice. On the other hand, the rest, five students, felt no different impact with textual enhancement.

The Effect of Textual Enhancement on Low and High Achievers and their Perspectives

To have more specific contribution to the existing theories, the next findings of this research were intended to know the effectiveness of textual enhancement toward the high achiever and low achiever students. The grouping process was conducted based on the students' score obtained from the pre-test. The high achievers were ones who got 60 or more, while the low achievers were ones who got 55 or less. There were 15 students who were considered as low achievers, and 11 students who were considered as high achievers.

From the computation, the low achievers had a higher average of gain score in the passive voice achievement compared to the high achievers. Moreover, the result of t-test computation showed that the low achievers taught by enhanced instruction have a significant better passive voice achievement compared to the high achievers taught by enhanced instruction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the enhanced instruction, which

was equipped with textual enhancement, was more effective to be used for low achiever students who had a lower knowledge in passive voice.

When the gained score was analyzed with the result of the questionnaire, it produced some interesting findings. The first one is that the ones who got the most gain score, stated that the textual enhancement helped them to master passive voice. However, they claimed that textual enhancement did not make them notice and focus on form of passive voice. This finding was in other line with the assumption stated by Han et al. (2008) which claimed that textual enhancement is capable in encouraging learner to notice visually enhanced forms in meaning-bearing input. On the other hand, although they got the fewest or no gain score, they claimed that the textual enhancement helped them to notice and focus on form of passive voice. Moreover, they felt that they could master passive voice with the help of textual enhancement. Yet, the result of the test showed that they gained so little or maybe nothing.

Regarding with the other assumption of Han et al. (2008) which claims textual enhancement may also lead to acquisition but depend on the learner's schemata of the target form, only seven subjects proved it. And the rest rejected it. Another result is about fifteen students who loved reading, especially in English, had gained score more than 18 points in average, while the students who did not like reading had gained score about 13 points in average. It means that the textual enhancement is more effective when implemented to the students who loved reading.

Conclusion

There are several facts and viewpoints which were derived from the findings and the discussions of this research. First, the students who were taught by using enhanced instruction which was equipped with textual enhancement have a better passive voice achievement than the students taught by explicit instruction only. It means that textual enhancement has a significant effect on the students' passive voice achievement. The next fact is that textual enhancement was more effective when implemented to those who were considered as low achievers than those considered as the high achievers. It was proved with the findings of the research that the low achievers gained more scores in average than the high achievers.

From the results of the questionnaire delivered to the students from the experimental group, they viewed that textual enhancement gave a positive impact on mastering the passive voice. They felt more aware and focused on the passive voice aspect while reading the text for meaning and function. Moreover, the students felt that it was easier to recognize the pattern of passive voice when it was textually enhanced. This conclusion was in line with the previous research done by some experts in other countries.

As the findings said that textual enhancement produced significant improvement in passive voice achievement, it could be a consideration for English teachers/instructors/lecturers to utilize textual enhancement in the teaching of passive voice instead of using rule explanation only. For textbook publishers, the findings of this research will be an inspiration to produce textbooks equipped with textual enhancement. Then, it was expected that with the use of textual enhancement in the classroom, the barrier in getting the maximum achievement of passive voice can be minimized or even omitted.

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